

George Washington Papers, Series 2, Letterbooks 1754-1799

To GOVERNOR PATRICK HENRY

Mount Vernon, March 5, 1786.

Your Excellency's favor of the 6th. ulto. came duly to hand, but I had no opportunity before the 2d. inst: of laying it before the Directors of the Potomac Company.

By the Board, I am desired to inform your Excellency, that they decline taking the six felons in the public Goal; at the same time that they feel themselves obliged by the offer.⁹³ I have the honor, etc.⁹⁴

To JOHN FRANCIS MERCER

Mount Vernon, March 6, 1786.

Dr. Sir: The Treasurer of the Potomack Company being desired by the Directors of it to send a careful hand to Annapolis for the advance due on the State subscription; I pray you to pay the Bearer (who will be that person) the £200, for which you requested me to draw on you at that place. I am, etc.

P. S. Since writing to you the 30th. of Jany. on this subject, I have myself sent the 20 guineas &c. to Mr. Pine.⁹⁴

93. Governor Henry's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

94. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN MURRAY & CO.⁹⁵

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Mount Vernon, March 8, 1786.

Gentn: Your letter of the 6th. in answer to mine of the same date, is before me; but from the present view I have of the subject, I do not conceive that my entering into a Contract for Herrings on the terms offered by *you*, would be eligible; 1st. because in my judgment, you estimate them too low, lower than they usually sell for at the landings. 2dly. because your Salt is rated higher than, I believe it is to be bought for, more than I have lately given. 3dly. because Liverpool Salt is inadequate to the saving of Fish, and therefore useless in this business. 4thly. because I would not, on any terms, go to Dumfries for this Article; and fifthly, because it does not suit me to receive Salt *alone* in paymt.

Moreover, if your coarse salt is allum or lump Salt, I conceive it must be reduced by pounding, before it can be applied, which would add to the expence of curing. Lisbon is the proper kind of Salt for Fish.

From these considerations I must decline contracting to furnish Herring unless you are disposed to offer more favourable terms. I am, etc.⁹⁶

95. Of Alexandria, Va.

96. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To BATTAILE MUSE

Mount Vernon, March 8, 1786.

Sir: I have just received your letter of the 20th. of last month, and request that you will proceed as you have begun, that is, to do equal and impartial justice to the Tenants and myself. I want no improper advantage of them on the one hand: on the other, where leases are clearly forfeited, by a manifest intention on the part of the Tenant to neglect all the Covenants in them, that were inserted for my benefit; and their sole aim has been to make

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traffic of the Land, I shall have no scruple in getting them aside, and beginning afresh upon the best rents I can get for ten years.

At any rate, it is my wish that you would be as attentive to the other Covenants of the Leases, as to that which exacts the rent: particularly to those which require a certain proportion of wood-Land to be left standing in one place, to orchards, to Meadows, and to buildings. These were as much objects with me, as the Rent, nay more, because to these I looked, to have the value of my land enhanced, whilst I was, in the first instance, contenting myself with low Rents. If therefore, these have passed off unnoticed by the Tenants, it should be punished equally with the non-payment of Rents. I mention these things because it is my wish they should be strictly complied with.

There is another matter, or two which, in renting my Lands, I am desirous you should always keep in view, first, to lease to no person who has Lands of his own adjoining them; and 2dly. to no one who does not propose to live on the premises. My reasons are these, in the first case my Land will be cut down, worked and destroyed to save his own, whilst the latter will receive all the improvements.

In the second case, if the Tenant does not live thereon it will not meet a much better fate, and negro Quarters and Tobacco pens will probably be the best edifices of the Tenement. One Grigg (I think his name is) an overseer to Colo. John Washington,⁹⁷ must be an exception, because, at the instance of my Brother, I consented to the purchase he has made.

Inclosed you have a Letter for Mr. Robt. Rutherford, of whom you will endeavor to receive the amount of the within. If you should succeed in this, you may carry it to my credit and draw a commission thereon as if collected for rent. I also send you an Account against a Captn. David Kennedy (I believe of Winchester) to receive if you can, on the same terms. I put this accot. about eighteen months ago into the hands of Genl. Morgan to whom Kennedy had, I believe, made sale of a Lott in Winchester, but know not to what effect. It

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may be well to enquire of Morgan concerning it, previous to an application to Kennedy. I am, etc.⁹⁸

To HUGH HOLMES

Mount Vernon, March 10, 1786.

Sir: For the honor you have done me in calling your only child by my name, and that too, you add, when the issue of the American struggle stood suspended. I pray you to accept my best acknowledgments.

My thanks are also due for your

97. John Augustine Washington.

98. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

politeness in sending me a piece of Linen of your staple manufacture: and I am particularly indebted to you for the favourable wishes and flattering expressions of your letter to me of the 4th. of August last.

Your Country has my best wishes for the fullest of everything which is interesting to the rights of mankind, and you Sir, that you may be principal sharer of them, being, Your etc.⁹⁹

To SAMUEL PURVIANCE

Mount Vernon, March 10, 1786.

Sir: Your Letter of the 6th. inst: is this moment put into my hands; was it in my power I would cheerfully answer your queries respecting the settlements on the Kanhawa; the nature of the water and quality of the soil.

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But of the *first* , I only know from information that Colo. Lewis is settled there: from his own mouth I learnt that it was his intention to do so, and to establish a Town in the fork of the two rivers, where he proposed to fix families in the vicinity on his own Lands. Of the second, I never could obtain any distinct account of the navigation. It has been variously represented; favorably by some, extremely difficult by others, in its passage thro' the Gauley mountain, (which I presume is the Laurel hill): but the uncertainty of this matter will now soon be at an end, as there are commissioners appointed by this State to explore the navigation of that

99. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*,

river and the communication between it and James river, with a view to a portage. This, equally with the extension of the Potomac navigation, was part of my original plan, and equally urged by me to our Assembly; for my object was to connect the Western and Eastern or Atlantic States together by strong commercial ties.

I am a friend, therefore on this principle to every channel that can be opened, and wish the people to have choice. The Kanhawa, and James river, if the obstacles in the former are not great, are certainly the shortest and best for the settlers thereon, for those on the Ohio below, above, perhaps as high as the little Kanhawa and for the Country immediately west of it.

The Monongahela and Yohoghaney with the Potomac are most convenient for all the settlers from the little Kanhawa, inclusively, to Fort Pitt and upwards, and west as far as the Lakes. Susquehanna and the Alleghany above Fort Pitt some distance, will accommodate a third District of Country; and may for ought I know, be equally convenient to the trade of the Lakes. All of them therefore have my best wishes; for as I have observed already, my object and my aim are political. If we cannot bind those people to us by interest, and it is no otherwise to be effected but by a commercial knot, we shall be no more to them after a while, than G. Britain or Spain, and they may be as closely linked with

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one or other of those powers, as we wish them to be with us, and in that event, they may be a severe thorn in our side.

With respect to the nature of the soil on the Kanhawa, the bottoms are fine, but the lands adjoining are

broken. In some places the hills are very rich, in others piney and very poor: but the principal reason, as I conceive, why the settlement has not progressed more, is that the greater part if not all the good Lands, on the main river, are in the hands of persons who do not incline to reside thereon themselves, and possibly hold them too high for others, as there is a surrounding country open to them; this I take to be my own case, and might be an inducement to concur in any well concerted measures to further a settlement, which might ultimately, not at too great a distance, subserve my interest in that quarter.

The Great Kanhawa is a long river with very little interruption for a considerable distance: No very large waters empty into it, I believe; Elk river, Coal river and a Creek called Pokitellico below the falls, and Green river above them, are the most considerable. I am glad to hear that the Susquehanna canal is so well advanced. I thank you for the offer of Mr. Nielson's services in the western country, and am, with very great, &c.

To WILLIAM DRAYTON

Mount Vernon, March 25, 1786.

Sir: The Letter which you did me the honor to write to me on the 23d. of November last, came safely; tho' not at so early a period as might have been expected from the date of it. I remark this by way of apology for

my silence 'till now.

I feel very sensibly, the honor conferred on me by the South Carolina Society for promoting and improving agriculture and other rural concerns, by unanimously electing me

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the first honorary member of that Body; and I pray you Sir, as Chairman, to offer my best acknowledgements and thanks for this mark of its attention. To you, for the flattering terms in which the desires of the Society have been communicated, my thanks are particularly due.

It is much to be wished that every State in the Union would establish a Society similar to this; and that these Societies would correspond with, and fully and regularly impart to each other, the result of the experiments actually made in husbandry together with such other useful discoveries as have stood, or are likely to stand the test of investigation. Nothing in my opinion would contribute more to the welfare of these States, than the proper management of our Lands; and nothing, in this State particularly, seems to be less understood. The present mode of cropping practised among us, is destructive to landed property; and must, if persisted in much longer, ultimately ruin the holders of it. I have the honor, etc.¹

1. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To SIR EDWARD NEWENHAM

Mount Vernon, March 30, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Having cause lately, to apprehend a miscarriage of the letter, of which the enclosed is a duplicate, I do myself the honor of forwarding this copy as the best apology as I can make for a silence that might otherwise be ascribed to inattention, which would give me pain, as I have pleasure in your correspondences, and would wish to keep up a friendly intercourse with you by letter.

As your last letters gave me hopes of seeing you in Virginia this Spring, and nothing since has contradicted it, I think I may shortly look for that pleasure, and therefore shall add nothing more in this letter than my best wishes for the pleasantness of your voyage, and

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assurances of the happiness I shall derive from saluting you under my own roof; being, with every sentiment of esteem and regard Dr. Sir Yr., etc.³

To JOHN FITZGERALD AND GEORGE GILPIN

Mount Vernon, March 31, 1786.

Gentn.: Yesterday Mr. Brindley, in company with a Mr. Harris, Manager for the James river Company (the latter having been sent for the former, by the Directors thereof) left this on their way to Richmond, from whence

3. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

Mr. Brindley expects to be returned, as far as Alexandria, in seven days from the date hereof. I have engaged him to call upon Colo. Gilpin on his rout back.

Mr. Brindley and Mr. Harris took the great Falls in their way down and both approve of the present line for our Canal: the first very much; he conceives that 9/10ths of the expence of the one fifth proposed, will be saved by this cut; the work altogether as secure, and the entrance into the river by no means unfavorable. He thinks however that a good deal of attention and judgment is required in fixing Locks there; the height of which he observes is always governed by the ground; they frequently run from four to eighteen feet, and some times are as high as twenty four.

The nature and declination of the ground, according to him, is alone to direct, and where this will admit he thinks the larger the Locks are made the better, because more convenient.

With respect to this part of the business I feel, and always have confessed an entire incompetency: nor do I conceive that theoretical knowledge alone is adequate to the undertaking. Locks, upon the most judicious plan, will certainly be expensive; and if not properly constructed and judiciously placed, may be altogether useless. It is for these

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reasons therefore that I have frequently suggested (though no decision has been had) the propriety of employing a professional man.

Whether the expense of obtaining one in, and bringing him from Europe has been thought unnecessary, or too burthensome for the advantages, which are to be expected, I know not: but as it is said no person in this

country has *more* practical knowledge than Mr. Brindley, I submit to your consideration the propriety of engaging him to take the Falls in his way back; to examine, level and digest a plan for Locks at that place; if it shall appear good, and his reasons in support of the spots and sizes conclusive it will justify the adoption; if palpably erroneous, there is no obligation upon us to follow him; and the expence in that case [is the only evil which can result from it. this for the chance of a probable benefit, I am not only willing, but desirous of encountering; and if Colo. Gilpin has not already made the trip to that place which he proposed at our last visit, and disappointment there, it would give me great pleasure if it could be so timed as for him to accompany Mr. Brindley. This would not only give countenance to the latter, but afford him aid also; and might be a mean of preventing the little jealousies which otherwise might arise in the minds of our own managers. Taking Mr. Brindley to the works *now*, may, ultimately, save expence; at the same time, having a plan before us, would enable us at all convenient times, to be providing materials for its execution. I am, &c.

P. S. If my proposition is acceded to, it might be well to fix, at once what shall be given to Mr. Brindley. I will readily subscribe to what you two Gentlemen may agree to give him on this occasion]⁴

4. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*. The part in brackets is front a facsimile, in Washington's writing, in the *University of California Chronicle*, October, 1925, where a note is added by Washington, April 2, explaining the delay in sending the letter.

To REVEREND TIMOTHY DWIGHT

Mount Vernon, April 1, 1786.

Sir: I have been favored with a letter from you (without place or date) accompanying the Conquest of Canaan;⁵ for both I pray you to accept my grateful thanks, and the acknowledgment of the honor you have done me by the dedication.

Your fears with respect to the merits of the Poem, I hope are removed, for it is a pleasing performance, and meets the approbation of all who have read it. I have never had an opportunity of subscribing to the work, or I should have done it with pleasure.

With very great esteem and respect I am, etc.⁶

To LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR THOMAS CUSHING

Mount Vernon, April 5, 1786.

Dr. Sir: I have now the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your several favors of the 6th. 9th. and 16th. of Novr. and 22d. of Feby. I purposely delayed my acknowledgements of the first three, 'till I should receive the one promised therein, that I might give you no more trouble with my concerns than was unavoidable.

I feel myself under great obligation to you for your obliging and disinterested attention to my Jack; and for your kindness to the person who was sent

5. An epic in 11 books, published in 1785.

6. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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to conduct him home: he, the Spaniard, and the Jack Ass all arrived safely, and in as short a time as could well have been expected from the great distance, and manner of their traveling.

Your Draft on me in favor of Messrs. Isaac and William Smith, was paid the moment it was presented; and I have since paid Captn. Pearce's Accot., but not to the amount of his order in favor of a Mr. Hartshorne Mercht. in Alexandria: for I believe Captn. Pearce was ashamed himself of his charges after they were made, as he requested the above Gentleman, in a second letter, to receive whatever should be thought right. Mr. Hartshorne therefore, adding for the full passage of the Jack, made the A/c. of Mr. Ashton, in other respects, his government for the residue and instead of demanding, £63.5.6. was content to receive £33.3.6. and thought it enough. You have, I am persuaded, hit upon the true and only reason why Captn. Pearce withheld his Accot. from your examination; preferring to send it hither, exorbitant as it appeared from the face of it, rather than have entered into any dispute concerning it, I should have paid it had I not waited a while to learn the result of your application.

Mrs. Washington joins me in respectful compliments to yourself and Lady. and with sentiments of great esteem and regard, I am,⁷

7. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CHARLES CARROLL, ROBERT MORRIS, AND SAMUEL POWEL

Mount Vernon, April 5, 1786.

Sir: The Revd. Mr. Griffith⁸ who will present this letter to you is possessed of much property in the town of Alexandria, the value of which he is desirous of encreasing by buildings. To enable him to do this he wishes to borrow on interest, about £2500. As security for such a loan, he is willing to mortgage his interest in the above place, and proposes as a further security to offer other means; the nature of all he will explain to you.

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They are in my opinion amply sufficient, such as I should not hesitate to take if I had the money to lend; but you will be able to judge more fully of the matter, when they are laid before you.

From a long and intimate acquaintance with Mr. Griffith, I have a high opinion of his worth and entire dependance on his representations, which (as he may in some degree be a stranger to you) I have thought an act of justice to mention.⁹ I am, etc.¹⁰

To HENRY LEE

Mount Vernon, April 5, 1786.

My Dr. Sir: Ascribe my silence to any cause rather than a want of friendship, or to a disinclination to keep up a friendly intercourse with you, by letter. Absences from home, hurry of business, Company &c.,

8. Rev. David Griffith.

9. As printed from the letter sent, in the Long Island Historical Society Memoirs (vol. 4), the text varies in minor verbal details from this letter.

10. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

however justly they might be offered, are too stale and common place to be admitted. I therefore discard them; throwing myself upon your lenity, and depending more upon your goodness, than on any apology I can make as an excuse for not having acknowledged the receipt of your favours of the 16th. of Feby. and 2d. of March, before this time.

The first came to hand just after I had made one trip to our works at the great Falls of this River; and when I was upon the eve of another to the same place, where the Board of Directors by appointment met the first of last month. I can therefore inform you from my own observation, that this business is progressing in a manner that exceeds our most

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sanguine expectation, difficulties vanish as we proceed, the time and expence which it was supposed we should have to encounter at this place, will both be considerably reduced. After a thorough investigation of the ground there we have departed from Ballandine's rout for the Canal, and marked a fresh cut, which in our judgments will save #th. of the labour, consequently proportionate time and expence, and in the opinion of Mr. Brindley who has just been to see it, 9/10ths., and be equally good when effected. Upon the whole, to be laconic, if there are any doubts remaining of the success of this work, they must be confined to three classes of men, viz: those who have not opportunities of investigations, who will not be at the trouble of doing it when it is in their power, and those whose interests being opposed, do not *wish* to be convinced. The great Fall is the only place where, under our present view of the River, we conceive it necessary to establish Locks; the ground favors them, and there can be no doubt (this being the case) of Locks succeeding as well

in this as in other Countries, as the materials for erecting them are abundant. What difficulties may be found where no difficulty was apprehended, I will not take upon me to declare: where they were thought wholly to lie, we are free from apprehension.

My sentiments with respect to the fœderal Government, are well known, publicly and privately have they been communicated without reserve; but my *opinion* is, that there is more wickedness than ignorance in the conduct of the States, or in other words, in the conduct of those who have too much influence in the government of them; and until the curtain is withdrawn, and the private views and selfish principles upon which these men act, are exposed to public notice, I have little hope of amendment without another convulsion. The picture of our Affairs as drawn by the Committee, approved by Congress and handed to the public,¹¹ did not at all surprize me: before that report, tho' I could not go into the minutiae: of matters, I was more certain of the agregate of our 12 than I am now of the remedy which will be applied; without the latter I do not see upon what ground your Agent at the Court of Morocco, and the other at Algiers, are to treat, unless, having to do

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with new hands, they mean to touch the old string, and make them dance awhile to the tune of promises.

I thank you for the pamphlet which contains the correspondence between Mr. Jay and Mr. Littlepage;¹³ and shall be obliged to you for a Gazette containing the publication of the latter, which appears to have given rise to them. I am, etc.¹⁴

11. See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Mar. 28, 1785.

12. Left blank in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

13. Lewis Littlepage.

14. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To DAVID RAMSAY

Mount Vernon, April 5, 1786.

Sir: I pray you to accept my best acknowledgments of your letter of the 22d. of Feby., and thanks for the history of the Revolution of South Carolina,¹⁵ with which you have been so good as to present me. From what I have heard of its merits, I anticipate much pleasure in the perusal of the work.

It is to be regretted that your local situation did not allow you, with convenience, to take a more comprehensive view of the war. My gratitude for the favourable sentiments you have been pleased to express for me is due, and with esteem, etc.¹⁴

To THOMAS NEWTON, JUNIOR

Mount Vernon, April 9, 1786.

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Sir: I have been favored with your letters of the 20th. of Jany., 24th. of Feby. and 13th. of March, the last of which speaks of a letter written by you to me of the same date, this letter has never got to hand: but I have received in Alexandria the £60, which Messrs. Pennock & Skipwith promised to remit me on your accot., as also the Wine from Captn. Earle, in very good order.

My situation, since my retreat from public life, has been such as to put it out of my power to go into an examination and settlement of Accots. with that precision

15. Published in 1785 in two volumes.

14. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

which is requisite; and among others, the transactions between the deceased Colo. Lewis and myself stand open. I do not know (from any thing my memory affords) on what account he could draw an order in favor of Henry Mitchell, as I recollect no dealings with that Gentn., but presume it must be right. Nevertheless, if there is an Accot. annexed to the order, or if the order is expressive of the purpose for which it was drawn, you would do me a favor in transmitting a copy of it.

I have made several ineffectual applications for my accot. with Mr. Hill; but as Dr. Stuart is again going into that part of the Country in which he lives, I will make one effort more to obtain it, 'till this happens I can say nothing with respect to his credits, but will advise you as soon as it is in my power.

In one of your former letters you intimated that my superfine Flour would sell well in Norfolk, and it was my intention to have consigned you some 'ere this; but as the quantity I make is small, the demand for it in Alexandria has generally kept pace with my manufactory. However I believe it would now be in my power to send you from 50 to 100 barrels, if you thought the present prices in your Town would answer; and that you may be enabled to judge, I shall inform you that I have not sold one barrel this year which has not

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netted at my Mill 38/, cash paid on delivery; and some at 40/. Would it nett the former at Norfolk, free of freight commission and storage? Your

answer would determine my conduct, and I shall be glad to receive it by the return of the Post. I am, etc.¹⁶

To BENJAMIN LINCOLN

Mount Vernon, April 10, 1786.

My Dr. Sir: The violent rains and consequent freshes, have given such interruption to the Stages in this part of the world, that your favor of the 15th. ulto. did not reach my hands 'till saturday last. I accede to the pecuniary allowance of two hundred Dollars pr. Am: required by Mr. Lear, in addition to the stipulations mentioned in my last, as a compensation for his services, and shall be glad to receive him into my family as soon as he can make it convenient to repair to it. At any rate I shall be glad to know, as nearly as may be, when to expect him, that I may arrange matters accordingly. There can be little doubt of Mr. Lear's finding, by method and arrangement, more than the time he speaks of for Study, to facilitate, rather than impede which would give me pleasure, as far as it can be made to comport with the purposes for which he is employed. With the greatest esteem, etc.¹⁶

16. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To WILLIAM WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, April 10, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Three days ago *only* , I had the pleasure to receive your favor of the 18th. of December, under cover of one from Mr. Hammond of Baltimore. This gentleman writes me that the boxes which you had the goodness to send me, were then shipped on board the Baltimore packet for Alexandria. I every moment look for them, and feel myself much indebted for your kind attention to my request in this instance. I shall plant the acorns, and

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nurture the young trees, when they arrive, with great care; those brought last year by my Nephew (chiefly of the Laurel) stood the passage, the summer and the Winter, with very little covering, very well. I am now transplanting them from the box in which they were brought.

At the proper season if you could make it convenient, I should be obliged to you for saving for me some seed of the Palmetto, and of any other trees or shrubs that are curious, in Carolina, and not natives of this Country.

Mrs. Washington, and my Nephew Geo. A. Washington who has taken unto himself a wife, join me in every good wish for your Lady and Self, and with sincere esteem and regard, I am, etc.¹⁷

17. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To ROBERT MORRIS

Mount Vernon, April 12, 1786.

Dear Sir: I give you the trouble of this letter at the instance of Mr. Dalby of Alexandria; who is called to Philadelphia to attend what he conceives to be a vexatious lawsuit respecting a slave of his, which a Society of Quakers in the city (formed for such purposes) have attempted to liberate; The merits of this case will no doubt appear upon trial. but from Mr. Dalby's state of the matter, it should seem that this Society is not only acting repugnant to justice so far as its conduct concerns strangers, but, in my opinion extremely impolitickly with respect to the State, the City in particular; and without being able, (but by acts of tyranny and oppression) to accomplish their own ends. He says the conduct of this society is not sanctioned by Law: had the case been otherwise, whatever my opinion of the Law might have been, my respect for the policy of the State would on this occasion have appeared in my silence; because against the penalties of promulgated Laws one may guard; but there is no avoiding the snares of individuals, or of private societies. And if the

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practice of this Society of which Mr. Dalby speaks, is not discountenanced, none of those whose *misfortune* it is to have slaves as attendants, will visit the City if they can possibly avoid it; because by so doing they hazard their property; or they must be at the expence (and this will not always succeed) of providing servants of another description for the trip.

I hope it will not be conceived from these observations, that it is my wish to hold the unhappy people, who are the subject of this letter, in slavery. I can only say that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition

of it; but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, and that is by Legislative authority; and this, as far as my suffrage will go, shall never be wanting. But when slaves who are happy and contented with their present masters, are tampered with and seduced to leave them; when masters are taken unawares by these practices; when a conduct of this sort begets discontent on one side and resentment on the other, and when it happens to fall on a man, whose purse will not measure with that of the Society, and he loses his property for want of means to defend it; it is oppression in the latter case, and not humanity in any; because it introduces more evils than it can cure.

I will make no apology for writing to you on this subject; for if Mr. Dalby has not misconceived the matter, an evil exists which requires a remedy; if he has, my intentions have been good, though I may have been too precipitate in this address. Mrs. Washington joins me in every good and kind wish for Mrs. Morris and your family, and I am, &c.¹⁹

19. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To NOAH WEBSTER**

Mount Vernon, April 17, 1786.

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Sir: Mr. Lee,²² yesterday evening, gave me the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 31st. ulto, and the book with which you were so obliging as to accompany it, for both I pray you to accept my thanks. The author some time ago had the goodness to send me two copies of the poem.²³

I am equally obliged to you, Sir, for your kind assurance of looking out for an Instructor for the little folks of this family; but believe I have no occasion to trouble you in this business now. Sometime in the course of last summer, when Genl. Lincoln was here, I made particular enquiry of him on this head; and though he could not at that time, point out a character which he thought would answer my purposes in all respects, yet he has lately named a Gentleman of whom he speaks in high terms; and has given the conditions on which he wd come; which being acceded to on my part and a letter written to that effect, I conceive the matter is closed. If it should be otherwise, I will again give you the trouble of hearing from me on this subject.

My best wishes will attend you in your lectures, and in the prosecution of your design of refining the language, and improving the system of education, so as to reduce it to perfect regularity. I am, etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

22. Arthur(?) Lee.

23. Rev. Timothy Dwight's "Conquest of Canaan."

To JOHN ARMISTEAD

Mount Vernon, April 17, 1786.

Sir: It has been my hope since my return, that it would be unnecessary for me to remind you of the debt due to me from the Estate of your deceased Father; the speedy payment

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of which, at different times I have received assurances of from yourself. Besides standing much in need of the money (which alone will, I persuade myself, be a stimulus to the discharge of my claim) it may be well for you to consider the nature of it, and with what rapidity a protested Bill encreases the original sum. This is no inducement however for me to let it lie; for, as I have just hinted, I can with truth declare to you that my want of the money is more essential to me, than the interest arising therefrom. I am, etc.²⁴

To WILLIAM HARTSHORNE

Mount Vernon, April 19, 1786.

Sir: I am sorry that I have been so troublesome and teasing to you on accot. of the seeds you were so obliging as to endeavour to procure for me; but as my Boat is sent to Town, I am induced to ask if they are arrived, that they may in that case embrace the present conveyance. If they are not already at hand, I shall be obliged to you for countermanding the order for the Buck wheat,

24. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

as it is now totally useless for the experimental purposes for which I wanted it. This is nearly the case with respect to the Flax seed; but I will try late sowing, rather than let the season pass over altogether, consequently will wait a few days longer for this, in which time if it does not arrive, I pray it may be countermanded also. I am, etc.²⁵

To REVEREND WILLIAM GORDON

Mount Vernon, April 20, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Mr. Lund Washington having expressed a wish to quit business and live in retirement and ease, I could not oppose his inclination; and his having carried these desires into effect, that kind of business which he usually transacted for me, is now thrown on my shoulders in addition to what they bore before, and has left me less time than ever

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for my numerous correspondences and other avocations. I mention this by way of apology for not having acknowledged the receipt of your several late favors, at an earlier date.

As soon as your subscription papers came to my hands, I offered one in Alexandria and sent another to Fredericksburgh: from the first, a specific return has been made of the subscribers and is now enclosed; from the other, eleven pounds have been sent me with out the paper; the Gentleman (the Honl. James Mercer Esqr. one of the Judges of our General Court) having informed me that he would

25. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

take it with him to Richmond, and endeavor to encrease the number of subscribers there. This sum of eleven pounds added to the amount of the paper inclosed, makes £42 with which I have bought a Bill on Rhode Island.²⁶ I endeavoured to get one on Boston, but could not without waiting; which I thought might be more inconvenient, than the negotiation at the former place.

Your Cypher came safely to hand. I have not had leisure to examine it, but presuming no difficulty will arise in the use, I have laid it by 'till occasion may call it forth. From the purport of your letters, you must be on the eve of your departure for Europe. My best wishes, in wch. Mrs. Washington and the family join me, are offered for a prosperous voyage, and the accomplishment of your plans. I am, etc.²⁷

26. The "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers* has the following note: "The Bill referred to in the above is drawn by Josiah Watson & Co., on Messrs. Cromel & Caleb Child, Merchants, Warren, Rhode Island, for £42. at three days sight with or without advice; and is dated the 19th. April 1786."

27. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To BENJAMIN LINCOLN

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Mount Vernon, April 20, 1786.

Dear Sir: As Doctr. Cordons departure for England is an event that was to have taken place about this time and may have happened I take the liberty, in that case, of requesting the favor of you to do what shall appear right with the inclosed Subscription Paper and Bill.

I will make no apology for the trouble this request may give you as I persuade myself your inclination to serve the Doctr. will keep pace with mine, and neither can have any other motive in the business than to serve and oblige him.

With every sentiment of esteem, etc.

[HV.L.]

To THOMAS BRERETON²⁸

Mount Vernon, April 20, 1786.

Sir: Within these few days I have received your letter of the 12th., and some time ago, I recollect to have been favored with another letter from you, which in the hurry of business got overlooked.

It is now more than two years since indirectly I obtained a sight of the deceas'd Mrs. Savage's Will. I then thought, and still do think it strange that the Executors of this Will, should never have made any official communication thereof to the Trustees of that Lady in this Country; nor have made any direct enquiry concerning the situation of her affairs here. These may be summed up in a few

28. Of Baltimore, Md.

words; and shall be found to be as follows. When matters came to extremity between Doctr. Savage and his wife, and Mr. Fairfax and myself were obliged to put the trust

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Bond in suit to recover her annuity; the Doctor made use of all the chicanery of Law and Lawyers, to procrastinate the Suit; which the tardiness of our Courts (and during one period of the Revolution the suspension of justice) but too well enabled him to effect. It was therefore long before a judgment at common Law could be obtained; and this was no sooner done, than he threw the matter into Chancery, where I am told, for I have had no share in the management of this business for the last ten years, (that is since I took the command of the American forces) it has lain ever since. I believe Mr. Fairfax has done every thing in his power to bring the matter to issue; and I have heard, I think from himself, that there is now a probability of its soon. With great truth I can assure you that not one farthing of Mrs. Savage's annuity was ever paid to the Trustees; whilst we have been obliged to advance money out of our own pockets to carry on the prosecution, and whilst, moreover, from a representation of the distress that Lady was involved in, I gave her a Bill to the amot. of £53., on Jas. Gildart Esqr. of Liverpool, which is still due to me.

This is the best Accot. I am able to give you of the Trust, and you are at liberty to communicate the purport of it to Mrs. Innis.²⁹ I am, etc.³⁰

29. Ann (Mrs. Richard) Ennis (Innis), of Dublin, Ireland.

30. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THOMAS SMITH

May 8, 1786.

Sir: Vale. Crawford died indebted to me, say £100 Virga. Curry., more or less, previously thereto he wrote me the letter dated Jacobs Creek May the 6th. 1774, and accompanied it with the Bill of sale herewith enclosed, dated May 8th. 1774. Query. Is this Bill now valid? Will it secure my Debt? this is all I want. And can it be recovered without my hazarding a defeat; which may add cost without benefit.

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If these points are determined in the affirmative, I would endeavour to secure my Debt under the cover of the bill, and desire that you would prosecute my claim accordingly, but not otherwise. With great esteem, I am, etc.³²

To THOMAS CRESAP

Mount Vernon, May 8, 1786.

Sir: Your letter of the 8th. of last month came to my hands just as I was leaving home for Richmond, which is the reason you have not received an earlier acknowledgment of it.

I am not a member of, nor am I in any manner, interested in the affairs of the Ohio Company, nor indeed do I know at this time, of whom it consists, further than of those claiming under, and mentioned by you, of Colo. Mason and of the heir of my brother Augustine, who lives at the distance of an hundred miles from me; and is one whom I scarcely ever saw.

32. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

I feel myself much obliged by your polite attention in offering me a Lott at the mouth of the South branch; it will, I dare say, be a convenient spot, where on to establish a Town. I am, etc.³²

To THOMAS FREEMAN

Mount Vernon, May 8, 1786.

Sir: Being informed that Mrs. Crawford is on the point of having her negroes sold to discharge a Debt due from her late husband, Colo. Crawford, to Mr. James Cleveland, for whom you are Agent; I will, rather than such an event shall take place, agree to apply any money of mine, which may be in your hands, towards the discharge of the execution;

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and desire, in that case, you will receive such security as Mrs. Crawford can give for reimbursing me. I am, etc.³³

32. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

33. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To MARQUIS DE ST. SIMON

Mount Vernon, May 10, 1786.

Sir: I received with great pleasure (a few days ago in a letter from the Marquis de la Fayette) the news of your being in good health. The recollection of your gallant services, and the happy moments I have had the honor to spend with you in this country, will always be dear to me.

It appears by the Marquis's letter that the answer to a letter which you did me the honor to write to me (now more than two years) respecting the order of the Cincinnati, had never come to your hands. I cannot tell how to account for it, as all the papers are in the hands of the Secretary General. I well remember however, that at the general meeting which was held at Philadelphia in May 1784, that I laid all the letters with which I had been favored on that subject, before the members which constituted it; and that the Secretary was ordered to communicate the determinations which that meeting had come to, to the gentlemen who had written to the President, one of which was, that the members of the Society in France were to constitute a meeting of themselves in order, among other things, to investigate the claims of those who conceived they were entitled to the order, and to decide on them accordingly; in as much as the Meeting in this Country was not intended to be held oftener than triennially; and could not well at those times enter into the detail of a business which with more propriety would be taken up by the several State Meetings, and the one it had just authorized to be held in France.

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If Mr. de Menonville should happen to be with you, I pray you to offer him my Compliments, and to be assured yourself

of the sentiments of esteem and respect with which, I have the honor, etc.³⁴

To REVEREND JOSEPH ECKLEY³⁷

Mount Vernon, May 10, 1786.

Sir: I have had the honor to receive your favor of the 20th. ulto. and its enclosure. I was indebted to Doctr. Gordon before he left the Country, for the Boston Independent Chronicle; and am so since to your goodness for offering to continue them. The Doctr. sent these papers unasked, after having read them himself (being a subscriber), but as their continuation must be attended with expence and trouble, you would oblige me by withholding them. To be candid, my avocations are so numerous that I very rarely find time to look into Gazettes after they come to me. I feel myself, however, not less indebted to your politeness, and obliging offer, by the non-acceptance of it. With respect, I am, etc.³⁸

34. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

37. Of Boston, Mass.

38. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THOMAS RINGGOLD TILGHMAN

Mount Vernon, May 10, 1786.

Sir: Being at Richmond when your favor of the 22d. ulto. came to this place, is the reason of its having lain so long unacknowledged. I delayed not a moment after my return, to discharge the balance of your deead. Brother's Accot. against me, to Mr. Watson; probably he has informed you of it.

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As there were few men for whom I had a warmer friendship, or greater regard, than for your brother,³⁵ while living; so with much truth I can assure you that there are none whose death I more sincerely regret; and I pray you and his numerous friends to permit me to mingle my sorrows with theirs on this unexpected and melancholy occasion, and that they would accept my compliments of condolance. I am, etc.³⁴

To MARCHIONESSE DE LAFAYETTE

Mount Vernon, May 10, 1786.

Madam: Of all the correspondencies with which I am honored, none has given me more pleasure than yours, none which I am more desirous of continuing, or more ambitious to deserve. What then My Dr. Madam, must have been my mortification when, instead of receiving the letter you did me the honor to write to me on the 15th. of April last year, in due time, it was not 'till sometime in the course of last month, that I received it at all, and the parcels with which you were pleased to

35. Tench Tilghman.

34. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

accompany it. By mistake these parcels lay at Bordeaux a considerable time after they had arrived there, before it was discovered for whom they were intended, and then were sent by a Vessel which took a very circuitous voyage to this Country. I trouble you with this detail of matters by way of apology for what otherwise might appear a want of sensibility in me for your distinguished and valuable favors, than which nothing is, or can be more flattering and pleasing to my vanity.

The tokens of regard with which Miss de la Fayette and my name-sake have honored the young folks of this family, will cement the friendship which seems to be rising in their tender breasts; and will encrease those flames of it which they have imbibed from

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their parents, to which nothing can add strength, but the endearments which flow from personal interviews, and the unreserved exchange of liberal sentiments. Will you not then Madam, afford them this opportunity? May we hope for it soon? If the assurances of the sincerest esteem and affection: if the varieties of uncultivated nature; the novelty of exchanging the gay and delightful scenes of Paris with which you are surrounded, for the rural amusements of a country in its infancy; if the warbling notes of the feathered songsters on our Lawns and Meads, can for a moment make you forget the melody of the Opera, and the pleasure of the Court, these, all invite you to give us this honour, and the opportunity of expressing to you personally, those sentiments of attachment and love with which you have inspired us.

The noon-tide of life is now

passed with Mrs. Washington and myself, and all we have to do is to spend the evening of our days in tranquillity, and glide gently down a stream which no human effort can ascend. We must therefore, however reluctantly it is done, forego the pleasures of such a visit as you kindly invite us to make. But the case with you, is far otherwise, your days are in their meidian brightness. In the natural order of things you have many years to come, in which you may indulge yourself in all the amusements which variety can afford, and different countries produce; and in receiving those testimonies of respect, which every one in the United States would wish to render you.

My Mother will receive the compliments you honor her with, as a flattering mark of your attention; and I shall have great pleasure in delivering them myself. My best wishes and vows are offered for you, and for the fruits of your love, and with every sentiment of respect and attachment. I have the honor, etc.³⁶

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Mount Vernon, May 10, 1786.

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My dear Marquis: The Letter which you did me the favor to write to me by Mr. Barrett dated the 6th. of Feby., together with the parcel and packages which accompanied it, came safely to hand; and for which I pray you to accept my grateful acknowledgments.

36. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

The account given of your tour thro' Prussia and other States of Germany, to Vienna and back; and of the Troops which you saw reviewed in the pay of those Monarchs, at different places, is not less pleasing than it is interesting; and must have been as instructive as entertaining to yourself. Your reception at the Courts of Berlin, Vienna, and elsewhere must have been pleasing to you: to have been received by the King of Prussia, and Prince Henry his brother, (who as soldiers and politicians can yield the palm to none) with such marks of attention and distinction, was as indicative of their discernment, as it is of your merit, and will encrease my opinion of them. It is to be lamented however that great characters are seldom without a blot. That one man should tyrannise over millions, will always be a shade in that of the former; whilst it is pleasing to hear that a due regard to the rights of mankind, is characteristic of the latter: I shall revere and love him for this trait of his character. To have viewed the several fields of Battle over which you passed, could not, among other sensations, have failed to excite this thought, here have fallen thousands of gallant spirits to satisfy the ambition of, or to support their sovereigns perhaps in acts of oppression or injustice! melancholy reflection! For what wise purposes does Providence permit this? Is it as a scourge for mankind, or is it to prevent them from becoming too populous? If the latter, would not the fertile plains of the Western world receive the redundancy of the old.

For the several articles of

intelligence with which you have been so good as to furnish me, and for your sentiments on European politics, I feel myself very much obliged; on these I can depend. Newspaper

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accounts are too sterile, vague and contradictory, on which to form any opinion, or to claim even the smallest attention.

The account of and observations which you have made of the policy and practice of Great Britain at the other Courts of Europe, respecting these States, I was but too well informed and convinced of before. Unhappily for us, though their accounts are greatly exaggerated, yet our conduct has laid the foundation for them. It is one of the evils of democratical governments, that the people, not always seeing and frequently misled, must often feel before they can act right; but then evil of this nature seldom fail to work their own cure. It is to be lamented, nevertheless, that the remedies are so slow, and that those, who may wish to apply them seasonably are not attended to before they suffer in person, in interest and in reputation. I am not without hopes, that matters will take a more favorable turn in the foederal Constitution. The discerning part of the community have long since seen the necessity of giving adequate powers to Congress for national purposes; and the ignorant and designing must yield to it ere long. Several late Acts of the different Legislatures have a tendency thereto; among these, the Impost which is now acceded to by every State in the Union, (tho' clogged a little by that of New York) will enable Congress to support the national credit in pecuniary matters better than it has been; whilst a measure in which this state has taken the lead at its last session, will it is to be hoped give efficient powers to that Body for all commercial purposes. This is a nomination of some of its first characters

to meet other Commissioners from the several States in order to consider of and decide upon such powers as shall be necessary for the sovereign power of them to act under;³⁹ which are to be reported to the respective Legislatures at their autumnal sessions for, it is to be hoped, final adoption; thereby avoiding those tedious and futile deliberations, which result from recommendations and partial concurrences; at the same time that it places it at once in the power of Congress to meet European Nations upon decisive and equal ground. All the Legislatures, which I have heard from, have come into the proposition, and have made very judicious appointments: much good is expected from this measure, and it is regretted by many, that more objects were not embraced by the meeting. A General

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Convention is talked of by many for the purpose of revising and correcting the defects of the foederal government; but whilst this is the wish of some, it is the dread of others from an opinion that matters are not yet sufficiently ripe for such an event.

The British still occupy our Posts to the Westward, and will, I am persuaded, continue to do so under one pretence or another, no matter how shallow, as long as they can: of this, from some circumstances which had occurred, I have been convinced since August, 1783 and gave it as my opinion at that time, if not officially to Congress as the sovereign, at least to a number of its members, that they might act accordingly. It is indeed evident to me, that they had it in contemplation to do this

39. "The General Assembly have appointed Edmund Randolph, James Madison, junr., Walter Jones, St. George Tucker, Meriwether Smith, David Ross, William Ronald and George Mason Commissioners to meet others from the different States...for the purpose of framing, such regulations of Trade as may be judged necessary to promote the general interests. I have to request your Excellency's attention to this subject, and that you will be pleased to make such communications of it as may be necessary to forward the views of this Legislature."— *Patrick Henry to the President of Pennsylvania*, Feb. 23, 1786.

This convention met at Annapolis in September, 1786.

at the time of the Treaty; the expression of the Article which respects the evacuation of them, as well as the tenor of their conduct since relative to this business, is strongly marked with deception. I have not the smallest doubt but that every secret engine is continually at work to inflame the Indian mind, with a view to keep it at variance with these States, for the purpose of retarding our settlements to the Westward, and depriving us of the fur and peltry trade of that country.

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Your assurances my dear Marquis, respecting the male and female Asses,⁴⁰ are highly pleasing to me, I shall look for them with much expectation and great satisfaction, as a valuable acquisition and important service.

The Jack which I have already received from Spain, in appearance is fine; but his late royal master, tho' past his grand climacteric, cannot be less moved by female allurements than he is; or when prompted, can proceed with more deliberation and majestic solemnity to the work of procreation. The other Jack perished at Sea.

Mr. Littlepage in his dispute with Mr. Jay seems to have forgot his former situation. It is a pity, for he appears to be a young man of abilities. At the next meeting of the Potomac Company (which I believe will not be 'till August) I will communicate to them your sentiments respecting the terms on which a good Ingénieur des ponts and chaussées may be had and take their opinion thereon.

The benevolence of your heart my Dr. Marqs. is so conspicuous upon all occasions, that I never wonder at any fresh proofs of it; but your late purchase of an estate in the colony of Cayenne, with a view of emancipating the slaves on it, is a generous and noble proof of your humanity. Would to God a like spirit would diffuse itself generally

40. From the island of Malta.

into the minds of the people of this country; but I despair of seeing it. Some petitions were presented to the Assembly, at its last Session, for the abolition of slavery, but they could scarcely obtain a reading. To set them afloat at once would, I really believe, be productive of much inconvenience and mischief; but by degrees it certainly might, and assuredly ought to be effected; and that too by Legislative authority.

I give you the trouble of a letter to the Marqs. de St. Simon, in which I have requested to be presented to Mr. de Menonville. The favourable terms in which you speak of Mr. Jefferson gives me great pleasure: he is a man of whom I early imbibed the highest

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opinion. I am as much pleased, therefore, to meet confirmations of my discernment in these matters, as I am mortified when I find myself mistaken.

I send herewith the copies of your private Letters to me, promised in my last, and which have been since copied by your old aid. As Mrs. Washington and myself have both done ourselves the honor of writing to Madame de la Fayette, I shall not give you the trouble at this time of presenting my respects to her; but pray to accept every good wish which this family can render for your health and every blessing this life can afford you. I cannot conclude without expressing to you the earnest enquiries and ardent wishes of your friends (among whom, I claim to stand first) to see you in America, and of giving you repeated assurances of the sincerity of my friendship, and of the Affectionate regard with which I am etc.

P. S. I had like to have forgotten a promise which I made in consequence of the enclos'd application from Colo. Carter. It was, that I would write to you for the wolf hound if to be had conveniently: The inducements, and the services you would render by this act, will be more evident from the expression of the letter than from any thing I can say.

The vocabulary⁴¹ for her imperial Majesty,⁴² I will use my best endeavours to have compleated; but she must have a little patience, the Indian tribes on the Ohio are numerous, dispersed and distant from those who are most likely to do the business properly.⁴³

***To BATTAILE MUSE**

Mount Vernon, May 12, 1786.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 6th. instr. but not inclining to take your surplus Wheat, on purchase, will order it to be ground and packed, subject to your order. As you did not direct what kind of flour it should be made into, it will be fine only, unless you should in time direct otherwise.

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I lost very considerably by the delay of your Wheat. In the first of the Manufactury of it I had a brisk demand for my superfine flour at 40/. and 38/. per Barrl. and for that which has been lately ground I have not had more than 32/. offered, and this price for a small quantity only.

The inclosed was brought to me (under cover) by the person whose name is mentioned therein and with whom I have agreed. I am etc.⁴⁴

41. A vocabulary of the Shawano and Delaware Indians was compiled and forwarded two years later. (See Washington's letter to Marquis de Lafayette, Jan. 10, 1788, *post.*)

42. The Empress of Russia.

43. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

44. From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Judge E. A. Armstrong, of Princeton, N. J.

***To JOHN RUMNEY**

Mount Vernon, May 15, 1786.

Sir: I am indebted to you for your favor of the 5th. of September, and to Messrs. Robinson, Sanderson and Rumney for their letter of the 28th. of Jany. in the present year. The last was accompanied with 1400 Flags, which came with very little brakages; and for your care of, and attention to which, I beg you to accept my sincere thanks.⁴⁵

On the 18th. of Novr. I inclosed you a Bill on Wakelin Welch Esqr. of London for £50 Sterg.; and will, before Mr Sanderson leaves the Country, settle with him for the Ballance. It gives me pleasure to hear that we may soon expect to see you in this Country again. With great esteem and regard, I am, etc.⁴⁶

To WILLIAM FRISBIE FITZHUGH

Mount Vernon, May 15, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Your favor of the 13th. came to me this day. Particular attention shall be paid to the mares which your servant brought; and when my Jack is in the humour they shall derive all the benefits of his labours. At present, tho' young, he follows what one may suppose to be the example of his late Royal Master, who cannot, tho' past his grand climacteric, perform seldomer or with more majestic solemnity than

45. The following is noted in Washington's "Diary" under date of Monday, May 22, 1786: "Began to take up the pavement of the Piazza." May 23: "this day began to lay the Flags in my Piazza." May 27: "Finished laying 28 courses of the pavement in the Piazza."

46. From a photostat of the original in the "Washington Photostats" in the Library of Congress.

he does. However I have my hopes that when he becomes a little better acquainted with republican enjoyments, he will amend his manners and fall into our custom of doing business; if the case should be otherwise, I shall have no disinclination to present his Catholic Majesty with as valuable a present as I received from him.

I am very sorry to hear of the accident which befel Colo. Fitzhugh in his late trip to Virginia; but from the effect of the fall I hope he will soon be recovered. I am happy in having it in my power to furnish him with a bushel of the Barley requested in your letter. A propos, are there any persons in your neighbourhood who raise Lambs for sale? My stock of Sheep were so much neglected during my absence, that I would gladly buy one or two hundred ewe lambs, and allow a good price for them, in order to get it up again. A line from you when convenient, in answer to this query, would be obliging. Mrs. Washington and the rest of the family join me in every good wish for the Colo., his Lady and yourself. I am, etc.⁴⁷

To GEORGE TAYLOR, JUNIOR⁴⁸

Mount Vernon, May 18, 1786.

Sir: You will excuse me I hope for not having acknowledged the receipt of your favors of the 21st. and 25th. of Feby. at an earlier period. The truth is, I have been much hurried and a good deal from home since they came to this place.

47. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

48. Of New York, He had been one of Varick's writers.

I thank you for your obliging attention to the apples, which were very good, and arrived safely; and Mrs. Washington joins me in thanking you also for your kind present of pickled and fried Oysters,⁴⁹ which were very fine. This mark of your politeness is flattering, and we beg you to accept every good wish of ours in return. With esteem, I am, etc.⁴⁷

To ROBERT LEWIS & SONS

Mount Vernon, May 18, 1786.

Gentl: Waiting to be informed of what I stand indebted to you, is the cause of my not acknowledging sooner the receipt of your favor of the 24th. of May last year. I have now requested Colo. Biddle to enquire into, and to discharge what is due from me.

I feel myself very much obliged to you for the trouble you have had in obtaining a Miller for me. Mr. Davenport seems to be a very honest, good kind of man; but as a miller, and as a person skilled in the art of keeping a mill in order, I think him much inferior to Roberts. In these points perhaps Roberts had no superior; but his propensity to liquor, and his turbulent temper when under the intoxicating doses of it, were not to be borne. I have no

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trouble at all with Davenport; he is steady, orderly and quiet, and does, I believe, as well as he knows how. We have neither of us

49. The pickled and fried oysters were preserved in pots.

47. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

intimated any inclination to part; and if the reputation of my flour (which stood very high under Robert's management) can be maintained, it is all I want.

The Agreement which you entered into with him is perfectly satisfactory to me, and I thank you for your attention to the business. With great esteem, I am, etc.⁵⁰

To THE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mount Vernon, May 18, 1786.

Dear Sir: In due course of post, I have been honored with your favors of the 2d. and 16th. of March; since which I have been a good deal engaged and pretty much from home. For the enclosure which accompanied the first, I thank you. Mr. Littlepage seems to have forgot what had been his situation, forgot what was due to you, and indeed what was necessary to his own character: and his guardian, I think, seems to have forgotten every thing.⁵⁴

I coincide perfectly in sentiment with you, my Dr. Sir, that there are errors in our national Government which call for correction, loudly I would add; but I shall find myself happily mistaken if the remedies are at hand. We are certainly in a delicate situation, but my fear is that the people are not yet sufficiently *misled* to retract from error. To be plainer, I think there is more wickedness than ignorance mixed in our

50. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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54. The Lewis-Littlepage controversy was merely a matter of personal irritation and of no public importance.

Councils. Under this impression, I scarcely know what opinion to entertain of a general convention. That it is necessary to revise and amend the articles of confederation, I entertain *no* doubt; but what may be the consequences of such an attempt is doubtful. Yet something must be done, or the fabrick must fall, for it certainly is tottering.

Ignorance and design are difficult to combat. Out of these proceed illiberal sentiments, *improper* jealousies, and a train of evils which oftentimes, in republican governments, must be sorely felt before they can be removed. The former, that is ignorance, being a fit soil for the latter to work in, tools are employed by them which a generous mind would disdain to use; and which nothing but time, and their own puerile or wicked productions can show the inefficacy and dangerous tendency of. I think often of our situation and view it with concern. From the high ground we stood upon, from the plain path which invited our footsteps, to be so fallen! so lost! it is really mortifying; but virtue, I fear has, in a great degree, taken its departure from us; and the want of disposition to do justice is the source of the national embarrassments; for whatever guise or colorings are given to them, this I apprehend is the origin of the evils we now feel, and probably shall labour under for some time yet. With respectful compliments. to Mrs. Jay, and sentiments of sincere friendship, I am &c.55

55. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, May 18, 1786.

Dear Sir: Your favors of the 19th. of Feby. and 16th. and 19th. March, are before me; And would have been acknowledged Sooner, had anything material, occurred.

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The Clover Seed, Boots &c. came in Season; but I must take care to be earlier in my application another year, as the Expence of getting heavy articles from Baltimore by land, comes high; I was charged forty odd Shillings for the Transportation of those Seeds, by the Stage, from that Place. I am nevertheless obliged to you for forwarding of them in that manner; as the delay would have rendered the Seeds useless for Spring Sowing, and altogether defective, perhaps, by the Fall. I am obliged to your Good Father for the Trouble he was at in choosing them, they are very good, and pray you, to Offer my Complts. and Thanks, to him therefore, and to Capt. Morris, for his kind present of a hunting horn, as I was unable to get One in Virginia, or at Baltimore.

If you Should not have purchased Young's Tour Through Great Britain, before this Reaches you, be pleased to decline doing it, as I have Just received a very Polite letter from that Gentleman, informing me of his having dispatched a Compleat Sett of his Works for my acceptance.

The Person in whose Name, the inclosed certificate, has Issued,⁵¹ is owing me a considerable Sum, (indeed half the Flour, and Meal, for which the Certificate was granted, belonged to me) and having requested that it may be Sold for what it will fetch, and his part of the Money applied to my Credit, I pray you to do it accordingly; but at the Same time, I must desire, as Half the Property is my own, that if it Shall appear to you, to be for my Interest, that it Should be

51. A copy of the certificate which is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*, and dated May 18, 1785, shows that the United States owed Gilbert Simpson 339 dollars and 53/90ths of a dollar, with interest at 6% from Nov. 4, 1780.

bought in again on my Accot., that you would do so. In either case, place the Amot. to my Credit in your Books, Subject to a future disposition.

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I must be owing Messrs. Robt. Lewis & Sons (of Philada.) some Trifle, on Accot. of a Miller which they procured for me, last year, but have never yet been able to get their Accot. Be so good as to know what the Amot. is, and Pay it; the Inclosed Informs them thereof.

I have Such a number of Gazettes crouded upon me, (many without orders) that they are not only Expensive, but really useless; as my other avocations, will not allow me time to Read them oftentimes, and when I do attempt it, find them more troublesome, than Profitable, I have therefore to beg if you should get money into your hands, on Accot. of the Inclosed Certificate, that you would be so good as to pay what I am owing to Messrs. Dunlap & Claypole, Mr. Oswald, and Mr. Humphreys.⁵² If they consider me, however, as engaged for the year, I am content to let the matter run on, to the expiration of it; but as my Expences run high, it would be imprudent in me to encrease them unnecessarily.

I am in want of Glass (for a Particular purpose) and beg you to Send it to me, by the first opportunity, agreeably to the Inclosed Patterns, and Quantities.

Is Linnen to be had cheap, at the Vendues in Philadelphia, for ready Money? And at what price, could the best dutch, or Strip'd Blanketts, be bought by the piece, of 15 or 16 in each, which I think is the usual number? I may want 200 of them. My Compliments,

52. Daniel Humphreys. He was publisher of the *Pennsylvania Mercury and Philadelphia Price-current*.

in which Mrs. Washington Joins, are Offred to Mrs. Biddle, and I am, etc.⁵³

[H.S.P.]

To THOMAS RIDOUT

Mount Vernon, May 20, 1786.

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Sir: Since my last dated the 20th. of August, I have been favored with your letters of the 31st. of Augt., 7th. of Septr. and 4th. of Novembr. in the past year.

The packages by the Peggy, Capt. Cuningham are safely arrived. I am sorry they should have given you any trouble, and am much obliged by your care of them.

I have paid Colo. Fitzgerald the full amount of the Wine and other articles wch. were sent to me by Captn. Smith; and am sorry to add that the quality of the Claret on proof, did not answer my expectation, and was far

53. In the writing of Tobias Lear.

short of some other of the same cargo, wch. I had drank at other places. I ascribe this however, to chance; it may be my luck next time to get better, and therefore when your Vessel comes to this River again, I request that a gross of the best may be sent to me.

Excuse the liberty I take of addressing a packet containing papers of consequence, to your care for the Marqs. de la Fayette, and a barrel; to both of wch. I ask your particular attention. I am, etc.⁵⁹

To JOHN MARSDEN PINTARD

Mount Vernon, May 20, 1786.

Sir: Your favors of the 24th. of January and 5th. of Feby. are at hand; but I have heard nothing of the Vine slips mentioned therein, nor do I know where to direct my enquiries for them, as you do not mention the Port or State to which the Industry, Captn. Gibson was bound. For your good intentions however, I am as much indebted, as if the slips had actually been delivered to me.

It is to be hoped and much to be wished that the negotiations of Messrs. Barclay and Lamb,⁵⁷ at the Court of Morocco, and with the State of Algiers, may terminate favourably

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for America. Should they not, our trade will be exceedingly incommoded by the piratical States of the Mediterranean.

At present, thro' the early

59. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

57. Thomas Barclay and John Lamb.

attention of Messrs. Jno. Searle & Co., and some others, (formerly my correspondents in Maderia) together with the purchases I have occasionally made in this Country since the re-establishment of peace, I am more than usually well stocked with Madeira Wine. I am, etc.⁵⁸

To NEIL JAMIESON

Mount Vernon, May 20, 1786.

Sir: Messrs. Balfour and Barraud of Norfolk died indebted to me in a pretty considerable sum. Meeting with Mr. Newton a few days ago at Richmond,⁵⁶ he informed me that the books of that Company had been in the hands of a Mr. Schau deceased, to whom you were an Exor.; and that it was highly probable you could in this character, give me some clue by which I could recover my Debt; for he added, that he was certain money was due in and about Norfolk to Messrs. Balfour and Barraud, and might be obtained, if a list of the Debts cou'd be had.

My debt was contracted for flour sold these Gentlemen. This flour was for Mr. Hansbury of London, and there can be little doubt of their connexion in trade; but whether of such a nature as to make the latter liable for the debt, I am unable to say.

If my present application to you is improper, or likely to give you any trouble in affording me the requisite information, you will

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58. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

56. Washington went to Richmond in connection with some land purchases from Col. George Mercer. He left Mount Vernon, April 23; arrived at Richmond, April 26; left Richmond, April 28; and reached Mount Vernon, April 30.

please to place the liberty I take, to a former acquaintance, and have the goodness to excuse it. I am, etc.⁵⁵

To HENRY L. CHARTON⁶⁰

Mount Vernon, May 20, 1786.

Sir: The letter which you did me the favor to write to me from Philadelphia on the 5th inst:⁶¹ came safely to hand, and I should have given it an earlier acknowledgment, had not frequent calls from home, and unavoidable business prevented it.

I do not perceive, upon recurring to the subject, that I can be more explicit in the description of my Lands on the Big Kanahawa, and on the Ohio between the two Kanhawas, than I was when I had the pleasure of seeing you at this place. If I recollect rightly I then informed you, that from the accounts given me of them by the Surveyor; from what I had seen of them myself, (especially the tract on the big Kanhawa) from every other source of information, and from my best knowledge and belief, there can be no finer land in that or any other Country; or lands more abounding in natural advantages.

The whole of them are washed by the rivers I have mentioned, are furnished with land streams fit for water works of various kinds, stored with meadow ground wch.

55. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

60. Or Chaston, or Le Chaston. The "Letter Book" addresses him as "Monst."

61. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

may be reclaimed in the cheapest and most expeditious manner imaginable, (by only cutting away trifling banks of earth, which have been formed by the Beaver) and abound in fish and wild fowl of all kinds, as well as every other sort of game with which the country is filled. With respect to the quality of the soil, it may be conceived that none can exceed it when I relate a single fact, namely, that it was the first choice of the whole country thereabouts, after a thorough research of it by an excellent judge, the late Colo. Crawford.

As to the situation of them, none can be more advantageous; for living about midway between the upper and lower settlements on the Ohio, the trade must pass within sight of those Lands, whilst the occupants of them, equally convenient to both might embrace the inland navigation of either Potomac or James river, as soon as they are made to communicate with the Western Waters; which no doubt will soon be effected. I think too, I should not be mistaken were I to add that 'ere long a town of some importance will be established in the vicinity of them, viz, at the confluence of the big Kanhawa and Ohio;⁶² which is the point at which the trade to Richmond, and that which is carried to the northern parts of this State, and to Maryland and Pennsylvania, must separate. But to go into a more minute detail in writing of what has before been the subject of oral conversation, would be more tiresome than interesting; especially as it is by no means my wish that *any purchaser whatever*, should rely upon my accot. of this matter, or on those of any others, but judge for himself or themselves, in all things.

When you asked me if I was disposed to sell these Lands, I answered and truly that I had never had it in contemplation, because I well knew they would rise more in

62. Point Pleasant and Henderson are now at the mouth of the Great Kanawha, on either bank of the river.

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value than the purchase money at the present time would accumulate by interest; consequently under these circumstances it would be difficult in the present moment to fix on a price which would be acceded to, that would be an equivalent for them hereafter. However as I had no family, wished to live easy and to spend the remainder of my days with as little trouble as possible, I said I would part with them if a good price could be obtained, and that my sense of their value might easily be ascertained by the terms on which I had proposed to rent them; (and which I think you told me you had seen). One of which amounting in fact to an absolute sale, being on a Lease of 999 years, renewable, was at ten pounds this currency per hundred acres, which at 5 pr Ct. (the legal interest in this State), would have come to 40/ like money pr. acre for the land on purchase; but I added, that if any one person, or sett of men would take the whole, I would make the terms of payment easy and abate considerably in the price. I therefore now inform you that the lands (the patents and plats of which I shewed you) the titles to which are uncontrovertible, free from those clashing interests and jarring disputes with which much of the property in that country is replete, are in quantities and situation as follows,

1st. 2314 on the Ohio river three or four miles below the mouth of the little Kanhawa.

2d. 2448 acres on the said river abt. sixteen miles below the former.

3d. 4395 acres on Ditto, just above the great bend in it, & below the other two.

4th. 10,990 on the big Kanhawa (West side) beginning within two or three miles of its conflux with the Ohio, and extending up the former 17 miles.

5th. 7,276 acres a little above this on the East side of the same river Kanhawa.

6th. 2,000 acres higher up the Kanhawa (west side) in the fork between Coal river and it.

7th. 2950 acres opposite thereto, on the East side. In all 32,373 acres on both rivers.

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For these lands I would take Thirty thousand English guineas (of the proper weight) or other specie current in the country, at its equivalent value. Two thousand five hundred of which to be paid at the execution of the Deeds and the remainder in seven years therefrom, with an interest of five pr. Ct. pr. ann: regularly paid at my seat 'till the principal shall be discharged.

I am not inclined to part with any of these Lands, as an inducement to settle the rest. My mind is so well satisfied of the superior value of them to most others, that there remains no doubt on it of my obtaining my own terms, as the country populates and the situation and local advantages of them unfold. These terms have already been promulgated, but I have not a copy of them by me, or I could send it to you: they were inserted in Dunlaps & Claypooles Gazette about two years ago, at whose Office it is probable a copy might be had. One of the conditions was, if my memory serves me, an exemption from the payment of rent three years whilst the tenements were opening and improvements making; this I am still inclined to fulfill.

The rents were different according to the term for which leases were to be granted.

If for twenty one years only, they were to commence and end at £5 pr. hundred; for in that case the stipulated improvements being made, I knew that almost any rent might be had for the Tenement thereafter.

If on leases renewable every ten years forever, the rents were in that case to advance in a certain ratio, to keep pace with the encreasing value of the Land. And if given in the first instance for 999 yrs. as has been mentioned before, then the rent was to commence at ten pounds pr. hund. acres; which being in fact an alienation of the property, shewed my ideas of its present value and purchase money, as mentioned already. These, as far as I can recite from memory, were the terms on which I offered to rent, and from which I feel no disposition to relax; unless, as in the case of a purchase, some one or more persons

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would take the whole off my hands at once, and become responsible for the rent; in which case being influenced by similar principles, I might abate accordingly.

I should have great pleasure in giving such letters as you have asked, to the Marquis de la Fayette and Chevr. de la Luzerne, but conceive they could only have an embarrassing operation. It is certainly as consistent with the policy of one country to discourage depopulation, as it is for another to encourage emigration. Considering the matter in this point of view I cannot suppose, however well disposed either of the above gentlemen may be to serve this Country, that they would do it at the expence of, and perhaps hazard of censure

from their own.

One of these gentlemen too being in the diplomatic or ministerial line would, undoubtedly, be very cautious in expressing a sentiment favorable to a business of this kind. My best wishes however will follow you thro' all the stages of it; and with esteem, I am, &c.

P.S. I shou'd be glad to know whether this letter found you in Philadelphia.⁶³

To GOVERNOR WILLIAM MOULTRIE

Mount Vernon, May 25, 1786.

Dr. Sir: The Letter which your Excellency did me the honor to write to me, of the 7th. ulto. came safely to hand; and I should feel very happy if I could render the Company (who are engaged in the laudable and important design of opening a cut between the Rivers Cowper and Santee) any services.

Mr. Brindley, nephew to the celebrated person of that name who conducted the work of the Duke of Bridgewater and planned many others in England, possesses, I presume, more *practical* knowledge of Cuts and Locks for the improvement of inland navigation, than any man among us, as he was an executive officer (he says) many years under his uncle in

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this particular business: but he is, I know, engaged with the Susquehanna company, who are I believe (for I saw Mr. Brindley about six weeks ago) in a critical part of their work. I have notwith

63. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

standing, written to a gentleman of my acquaintance who is not only a member of that Company, but one to whom the business is chiefly confided, and near the spot, to know if Mr. Brindley's services can be dispensed with long enough to answer the purposes mentioned in your letter: his answer shall be forwarded as soon as it comes to my hands.

It gives me pleasure to find a spirit for inland navigation prevailing so generally. No country is more capable of improvements in this way than our own, none which will be more benefited by them; and to begin well, as you justly observe, is all in all: error in the commencement will not only be productive of unnecessary expence, but, what is still worse, of discouragements. It appears to me therefore, that if the cost of bringing from Europe a professional man of tried and acknowledged abilities, is too heavy for one work; it might be good policy for several Companies to unite in it; contributing in proportion to the estimates and capital sums established by the several Acts. I see no necessity for confining the services of such a person to a single undertaking, one man may plan for twenty to execute; and the distance from Delaware (between which and Chesapeake a cut is in contemplation and Commissioners appointed by the two States to agree on a plan) to the Cowper river is not so great but that one person of activity might design for all between them, and visit the whole three or four times a year.

This is only a thought of my own, I

have no authority for suggesting it; but for my private satisfaction had written both to England and France, to know on what terms a person of competent skill could be obtained, and have received the following answer from my friend the Marqs. de la Fayette; "There is no doubt but what a good Engineer may be found in this country to conduct

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the work. France in this point exceeds England; and will have I think every advantage but that of the language, which is something, altho' it may be supplied by an Interpreter. An application from Mr. Jefferson and myself to the Ministry, and more particularly an intimation that you set a value on that measure, will ensure to us the choice of a good Engineer. They are different from the military ones, and are called Ingénieurs des ponts and chaussées. I think five hundred guineas a year while the business lasts, and an assurance not to loose his rank in France will be sufficient to provide you with the gentleman you want.”

I have also received an acknowledgmt. of the letter I had written to England; but the Gentleman there goes no further than to assure me he will make every necessary enquiry, and has no doubt but that a person may be obtained. He says nothing however respecting the terms on which he could be had. Mrs. Washington joins me in compliments and every good wish for Mrs. Moultree and yourself. With great esteem and respect, I am, etc.⁶⁴

64. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To SAMUEL POWEL

Mount Vernon, May 25, 1786.

Dear Sir: The Letter which you did me the honor to write to me on the 10th. inst: came safely to hand, and claims my particular acknowledgments and thanks.

When I beheld the trouble I had given you, in the long transcript from the essay on the farmyard, I was quite ashamed of the request I had made; but having no just plea to offer as an apology for doing so, I will rely on your goodness rather than a lame excuse, for pardon.

The Society,⁶⁵ in my opinion, have judged rightly in determining to continue their premium for the best Barn-yard; for whatever merits Colo. Morgan's Essay may have, something yet

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more perfect may be hit upon; and this being, as you justly observe, the basis of all good husbandry, too much encouragement cannot be given to men of ingenuity and industry, to turn their thoughts to an object of this magnitude, to induce endeavors to improve it.

It is from such attention as these, by similar societies, that Agriculture has been brought to the perfection it now is in England; and this certainly is the readiest path by which we can arrive at it here. Practices founded on experiments, and approved by these societies, are the best touch stones, and will prove our guide and director in all cases whatsoever.

Will Mrs. Powel never visit her friends on James River? Is it necessary to add how happy she and you

65. The Agricultural Society of Philadelphia, Pa.

would make Mrs. Washington and myself, to set this down as a halting place? If it was I would add the most unequivocal assurances of it. We unite in every good wish for you both, and I am, etc.⁶⁶

To ALEXANDER STEEL

Mount Vernon, May 25, 1786.

Sir: As I have no information of Doctr. Shiell's⁶⁷ death, nor any connexion with his family or affairs; I return the letter which you sent me for him (and which came to hand last night only) unopened. The Doctr. married a lady of Newtown in Pennsylvania, a Miss Harris, and had connexions, I believe, in trade with some gentn. in the City of Philada., but with whom they were formed, I am unable to inform you.

Altho' I have no doubt but that the Account, rendered by you of your services and sufferings, is literally true; yet as they did not happen to fall within my own knowledge, there would be an impropriety in my certifying them. Indeed it has always been a maxim with me, to grant Certificates to no officers in a subordinate character, who did not apply

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thro' the Colonel and genl. officer under whom they had served; or from the head of the department in which they had acted if in the staff; the presumption being, tho' the fact in some instances might be otherwise, that I could only be acquainted with their characters and conduct thro' one or the

66. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

67. Dr. Sheal, of Philadelphia. He removed to Kentucky and died there.

other of these channels. Congress have not, I believe, made provision for losses of property sustained in the course of the War, instances of which are without number; but for invalids and those who have been disabled they have, I believe, where the regular modes pointed out by their Resolves, have been pursued, made allowances, but what, or how to come at them, I am unable to inform you, as this business never went thro' my hands. I am, etc.⁶⁸

To JOSEPH JONES

Mount Vernon, May 25, 1786.

My Dr. Sir: I have been favored with, and thank you for your letter of the 14th inst: The reasons which you have been at the trouble to assign for the Executive's not calling the Assembly at an earlier period than the annual meeting, are very satisfactory; and I am much obliged to you for the recital of them, for I confess to you that I was not only among the number of those who expected this event, but under the publication of Congress of the 15th. of Feby. and my want of information of the precise state of mat

68. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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ters in other States, was among those also who could not account for the postponement. It will always give me pleasure to hear from you, because it will afford me fresh occasion for assuring you of the sincere esteem, etc.⁶⁸

To THOMAS NEWTON, JUNIOR

Mount Vernon, May 26, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Inclosed you have Peter Kirwins receipt for fifty barrels of superfine flour, which I beg you to sell to the best advantage, and remit what may be due to me, after deducting what I am owing to you.

Twenty four of these fifty barrels are inspected; the others, tho' of equal quality, are not. The reason is, the bearer calling unexpectedly, and being in a hurry, would not allow time to get the Inspectors from Alexandria; I was obliged therefore to send them without, or miss the conveyance; the former I preferred, as I have been some time on the enquiry for a Vessel. The quality of the uninspected, my miller assures me, is at least equal to the inspected, being quite fresh. With esteem and regard, I am, etc.⁶⁹

68. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

69. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOSEPH BROWN⁷⁰

Mount Vernon, May 30, 1786.

Sir: I have been favored with your letter of the 12th. of September,⁷¹ and thank you for the prints which accompanied it, by the Ship Potomac which arrived safely. The frames of these pictures are quite equal to my wishes, and you will please to accept my best

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acknowledgments of it; and assurances that an apology for their being inferior to those sent to Congress, was altogether unnecessary.

It gives me concern to learn from yourself, that the late war has been so injurious to your income, and so destructive of your hopes. By best wishes will attend any plan you may adopt for the perfect restoration of both. Of the obliging expressions of your letters, as they respect myself, I have a grateful sense, and am,⁶⁹

To MRS. MARY BRISTOW

Mount Vernon, June 2, 1786.

Madam: Though small were the Services I rendered you, consequent of your first application to me; yet it behoves me to add, in answer to your favor of the 15th. of December last, that it was all I then had, or now have it in my power to offer.

70. Of Islington, near London.

71. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

69. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

For having no share in the Legislative or Executive concerns of this Country, I could do no more than to bring your Petition before the former. This I did by a letter to the Governour inclosing it. What the ultimate determination of the Assembly was, respecting this matter, I am unable with precision, to inform you. Generally, I was given to understand, that however hard the case might appear to be, it was to be ascribed to the nature of the contest in which we had been oppressively involved, and tho' to be lamented as a Misfortune, was not to be attributed as a fault in the justice of this Country, since it was difficult, if not impracticable to draw a line between the promoters, and actors, and innocent Victims, of the War, in a national point of view. How far the reasoning is good I shall not take upon me to decide; but with much truth may assure you that I can readily

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enter into your feelings on this occasion, and sincerely wish that those who were the contrivers and abettors were alone to be the Sufferers by the War. I have the honor to be, etc.⁷⁴

To THOMAS RINGGOLD TILGHMAN

Mount Vernon, June 4, 1786.

Sir: I have to acknowledge the politeness of the offer contained in your letter of the 26th. ulto., and to thank you for the disinterestedness of it.

I shall have no scruple when occasion occurs to accept (in the small way

74. In the writing of Tobias Lear. From the original in the British Museum *Additional Manuscript* 9828.

I am in) the services you obliging you tender me, as proofs of my sensibility for your kindness, and as a testimony of my regard for the memory of your deceased brother,⁷⁵ who I knew took pleasure in obliging me by acts of this nature. With great esteem, I am, etc.⁷⁶

To DANIEL OF ST. THOMAS JENIFER

Mount Vernon, June 4, 1786.

Dear Sir: The Letter with which you favored me on the 24th. ulto. and the enclosures,⁷⁷ came to my hands by the last post, and I thank you for the information I have received from them. The Committee, by its Report, seemed disposed to run you hard; but happily the House viewed matters in a different light, and rendered you the tribute of applause which was due to your services; which, as every circumstance that can contribute to your honor or satisfaction, has afforded me much pleasure, being Dr. Sir, etc.⁷⁸

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75. Tench Tilghman.

76. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

77. The enclosure was the 25 pp. 12° pamphlet containing the report of the Intendant, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, and the action of the Maryland House. The letter and enclosure are in the *Washington Papers*.

78. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To JOHN RUMNEY**

Mount Vernon, June 5, 1786.

Sir: Since my last of the 15th. of May to Messrs. Robertson Sanderson and Rumney, I have been favoured with your letter of the 16th. of April by Captn. Aitkinson. The cost of the Flags is finally settled, with other articles had from your store in Alexandria; and I again thank you for the trouble you have had in this business, more so, as neither Commissions nor freight are charged, nor would be received, although I am very willing, and offered to pay both to Mr. Sanderson.

The Flags came very reasonably and will answer my purposes very well, though the workman did not keep to the sample in two or three respects, particularly in the thickness, and dressing of the Stones; some not being more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch thick (scarcely that on one side) and none with the same polish of the pattern: enough however may be picked out of the whole to floor my Gallery which is all I wanted. With great esteem and regard, I am etc.⁸¹

To JAMES TILGHMAN

Mount Vernon, June 5, 1786.

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Dear Sir: I have just had the honour to receive your favour of the 26th ulto. Of all the numerous acquaintances of your lately deceased son,⁷⁹ and amidst all the sorrowings that are mingled on that melancholy occasion,

81. From a photostat of the original in the "Washington Photostats" in the Library of Congress.

79. Col. Tench Tilghman. He died on Apr. 18, 1786.

I may venture to assert (that excepting those of his nearest relatives) none could have felt his death with more regret than I did because no one entertained a higher opinion of his worth, or had imbibed sentiments of greater friendship for him than I had done.

That you, Sir, should have felt the keenest anguish for this loss, I can readily conceive, the ties of parental affection united with those of friendship, could not fail to have produced this effect. It is however a dispensation the wisdom of which is inscrutable, and amidst all your grief there is this consolation to be drawn, that while living, no man could be more esteemed, and since dead, none more lamented than Col. Tilghman.

As his correspondence with the Comee. of New York is not connected with any transactions of mine, so, consequently, it is not necessary that the Papers to which you allude should compose part of my public documents; but if they stand single, as they exhibit a trait of his public character, and like all the rest of his transactions will, I am persuaded, do honor to his understanding and probity, it may be desirable, in this point of view, to keep them alive by mixing them with mine; which, undoubtedly, will claim the attention of the Historian, who, if I mistake not, will upon an inspection of them, discover the illiberal ground on which the charge mentioned in the extract of the letter you did me the honor to inclose me is founded. That a calumny of this kind had been reported, I knew; I had laid my

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acct. for the calumnies of anonymous scribblers; but I never before had conceived that such an one as is related, could have originated with, or have met the countenance of Captn Asgill, whose situation often filled me with the keenest anguish; I felt for him on many accts. and not the least, when viewing him as a man of honor and sentiment, how unfortunate it was for him that a wretch who possessed neither, should be the means of causing in him a single pang, or a disagreeable sensation, My favourable opinion of him however is forfeited if, being acquainted with these reports, he did not immediately contradict them. That I could not have given countenance to the insults which *he says* were offered to his person, especially the *grovelling* one of erecting a Gibbet before his prison window, will I expect, readily be believed when I explicitly declare that, I never heard of a single attempt to offer an insult, and that I had every reason to be convinced that he was treated by the officers around him, with all the tenderness and every civility, in their power, I would fain ask Captn. Asgill how he could reconcile such belief (if his mind had been seriously impressed with it) to the continual indulgences, and procrastinations he had experienced? He will not, I presume deny that, he was admitted to his parole within 10 or 12 miles of the British lines, if not to a formal Parole, to a confidence yet more unlimited, by being permitted, for the benefit of his health, and recreation of his mind, to ride, not only about the Cantonment, but into the surrounding country for many miles, with his friend and companion Maj. Gordon, constantly attending him. Would not these indulgences have pointed a military character to the fountain from which they flowed? Did he conceive that discipline was so lax in the American Army as that *any* officer

in it could have granted these liberties to a Person confined by the express order of the Commander in chief unless authorized to do so by the same authority? and to ascribe them to the interference of Count de Rochambeau, is as void of foundation as his other conjectures; for I do not recollect that a sentence ever passed between that General and me, directly, or indirectly, on the subject, I was not without suspicions after the final liberation and return of Captn. Asgill to New York that his mind had been improperly impressed or [that he was defective in politeness. The treatment he had met with, in my

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conception, merited an acknowledgement, none however was offered, and I never sought for the cause.

This concise acct. of the treatment of Captn. Asgill is given from a hasty recollection of the circumstances. If I had had time, and it was essential, by unpacking my papers and recurring to authentic files, I might have been more pointed, and full. It is in my power at any time to convince the unbiassed mind that my conduct through the whole of this transaction was neither influenced by passion, guided by inhumanity, or under the controul of any interference whatsoever. I essayed everything to save the innocent and bring the guilty to punishment, with what success the impartial world must and hereafter certainly will decide. With very great esteem, etc.]80

80. From the "Letter book" copy in the *Washington Papers*. The portion in brackets is from a facsimile of the original in Washington's writing, from a sales catalogue, 1929.

To JOHN FITZGERALD

Mount Vernon, June 5, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Whatever number of servants you and Colo. Gilpin may think it advisable to purchase in behalf of the Potomac Company from the Ship which is just gone up, will meet my approbation; and I shall readily concur with you in price. There is a Black smith on board highly recommended, and one or two stone masons which may be useful at our works.

Have you received any precise account of the appearance or effect of the late fresh, at the great Falls? From the swell of the water and quantity of drift wood at this place, I am led to believe that it must have exceeded in height, any within the memory of man; which makes me anxious to hear from our works.

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If there is anything which may require a meeting of the Directors, it would be convenient for me to attend (at any hour which may be named) on Wednesday next. I am, etc.⁸²

To WILLIAM FRISBIE FITZHUGH

Mount Vernon, June 5, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Your favor of the 26th. ulto. from Baltimore did not reach me 'till the 2d. inst: I will take the ewe lambs at the price they are offered by Mr. Reynolds; but not knowing the age of them, or when it may be proper to remove them, will wait 'till I hear from you again before I send, which may be when the mares

82. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

are taken from this; and when I send, the money shall also go for Mr. Reynold's Lambs, and others, if more can be added to them of good quality, at the same price.

My Jack has favored one of your mares with a cover; which, with three others, is the sum total of his performances to this time. I do not intend to withhold my own mares more than three days longer from Magnolio, in expectation of the Jacks serving them. If Colo. Fitzhugh should incline to let his other mare (if the Jack should not come to) go to the same horse, he shall be heartily welcome to the use of him. With very great esteem I am, etc.⁸²

To BENJAMIN LINCOLN

Mount Vernon, June 7, 1786.

My Dr. Sir: Inclosed is a copy of my last to you, soon after writing which I heard of Doctr. Gordon's sailing. Not knowing who his agent is, I again take the liberty of putting under this cover, the second Bill of exchange for him, and the original subscription paper on which

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the eleven pounds arose as part of the Bill (just mentioned) for forty two pounds which was the amount of both the Alexandria and Fredericksburgh

82. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

subscriptions. As I have passed my receipts to the gentlemen who collected the money at the places above named; I wish the Doctors Agent, or Attorney if he has appointed one, would acknowledge the receipt of the Bill to me.

Mr. Lear arrived here a few days ago, and appears to be a genteel, well-behaved young man; he delivered me your letter, in consequence of which I applied to, and have received a promise from Charles Lee Esqr. (brother to the Colonel) to furnish him with such Law Books as he may have occasion for. I wish you success in your Passamaquady undertaking, and with sentiments of very great esteem and regard, am, etc.⁸³

To THOMAS BEDWELL

Mount Vernon, June 7, 1786.

Sir: Your letter of the 27th. ulto. with the patterns enclosed, I have received. I am sorry for the misfortunes which you have met with in the course of your business, and heartily wish that your future attempts to carry on any useful manufactory, may succeed; but I think Sir, that it would be presumption in me to recommend to any gentleman in the State of South Carolina, a person from Philada. with whom I have no acquaintance, and of whose abilities in his business I have not a complete knowledge. I might with more propriety, venture to do it in my neigh

83. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

bourhood, or in this State, than in South Carolina, but even here, I should not feel myself perfectly justified in doing it. Letters from some Gentlemen in Philadelphia to their friends in So. Carolina would, in my opinion, be more suitable, and have their proper effect.

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You will have my best wishes for the success of any attempt that may prove useful and beneficial to the country. I am, etc.⁸⁴

To CHARLES McIVER

Mount Vernon, June 7, 1786.

Sir: I received your letter of the 5th. inst. together with the MSS. and other papers sent with it, which I have returned.

It gives me pleasure to see any attempts made towards improving literature and science, more especially when they tend to the immediate and particular advantage of this country, and I should always wish to encourage and promote them; but I cannot with propriety enter into your plan, and offer you the encouragement you desire, as I am not so well acquainted with your character and abilities as many Gentlemen in Alexandria undoubtedly are, who will have an opportunity of attending your lectures, which I shall not; and are capable of giving your plan every

84. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

encouragement which it deserves. I am, etc.

P.S. As the patterns and drawings may be useful to you on some other occasion, I return them.⁸⁴

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Mount Vernon, June 8, 1786.

My Dr. Marqs. You would be surprised at the old date of the letter herewith sent you, were I not to tell you that the vessel which carries it was to have sailed agreeably to the date, and by information was to do so every day since. Nothing new has occurred since it was

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written, nor should I have given you the trouble of a seasons letter by the same ship, had I not forgotten to mention in my last that Mrs. Washington had packed and sent for Madame de la Fayette's acceptance, a barrel of Virginia Hams. I do not know that they are better, or so good as you make in France, but as they are of our own manufacture (and you know the Virginia Ladies value themselves on the goodness of their bacon), and we recollect that it is a dish of which you are fond, she prevailed on me to ask your's and Madame de la Fayette's acceptance of them.

I wanted to have accompanied them with an anchor of old peach brandy, but could not provide any which I thought of such a quality as would do credit to the distillery of this liquor, and therefore sent none; and after all, both perhaps would have been better furniture for your Canteens on a long

84. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

wet march, than for your table in Paris. It is unnecessary to repeat the assurances of the affection and regard with which I am, etc.⁸⁵

To SIR EDWARD NEWENHAM

Mount Vernon, June 10, 1786.

Dear Sir: I cannot omit so good an opportunity as Mr. Wallace affords, of addressing a few lines to you; altho' from the barrenness of the times I have little to say.

Our Country is at present in peace, and measures are pursuing to give adequate powers to Congress to form such a commercial system as shall pervade equally every branch of the Union; without which we are unable to meet European powers on equal ground, and our trade with them will continue under many disadvantages.

I begin to despair (the season being so far advanced) of the pleasure of seeing you in Virginia this year; unless, instead of a Spring Voyage, you should incline to make an

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autumnal one. It would be but a repetition of former assurances were I to add, that I should be happy to see you in either, when ever your convenience and the affairs of Ireland will permit.

I little expected when I wrote you last, that Tharpe⁸⁶ was to be the principal workman in the ornamental parts of my new room. I had not,

85. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

86. Richard Tharp (Tharpe).

at that time, even heard of his arrival in this country; but having engaged one Rawlins of Baltimore in Maryland (lately from England) to finish it, I found when he had brought his men and tools here, that Tharpe had been contracted with and was the person on whom Rawlins depended for the execution of the plan on which we had, two or three months before, agreed. To this man I objected 'till it became evident that it must be him, or no work; there being no other, Rawlins said, competent to the undertaking. This being the case, and the inconvenience of laying another year out of the room being great, I consented to try him on condition that Rawlins, who I believe has left off work, himself should superintend it closely. Tharpe has been here now, more than six weeks, and hitherto has demeaned himself soberly and well. With great esteem and regard, I have the honor, etc.⁸⁷

To GOVERNOR WILLIAM MOULTRIE

Mount Vernon, June 14, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Since I had the honor of writing to your Excellency last, I have been favored with the enclosed from Mr. Hughes, in answer to mine respecting Mr. Brindley. If you Sir, or the Board of Directors of the So. Carolina canal, should incline to return the answer requested

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and will commit it to my care; I will be particularly attentive to it, as I shall have pleasure in obliging you, or them. I have the honor, etc.⁸⁸

87. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

88. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To HENRY LEE

Mount Vernon, June 18, 1786.

My Dr. Sir: Under cover of your favor of the 21st. of April, which came duly to hand, was a letter from Arthur Young Esquire, (Author of the tours thro' England and Ireland, with his observations on the Husbandry of those Kingdoms) informing me that he had sent me a compleat sett of all his works. As these have never yet come to hand, nor any advice of them, you would do me a favor (if you can recollect of whom you received the letter) by enquiring whether it was, or was not accompanied with a parcel. Mr. Young's account is, that these Books were sent to the care of Mr. Athaws, mercht. of London: but why Mr. Athaws should send the letter without the parcel, or *either* by way of New York, I cannot readily conceive; as there are vessels from London passing my door (the situation of which is well known to him) every day.

The winter and Spring has been exceedingly opposed to our works at the great Falls; the incessant rains often preventing, and at all times retarding the removal of earth. The latter rains in May which were continued for more than twenty days, have produced very calamitous effects in this country: half the wheat, (some say much more) and three fourths of the rye, are blasted, and the ground surcharged to that degree with water as to have rendered ploughing impracticable, which has involved the Indian corn *which did come up*, so much in weeds and grass as to leave a melancholy prospect in level lands, of this crop also.

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The advantages with which

the inland navigation of the rivers Potomac and James are pregnant, must strike every mind that reasons upon the subject; but there is, I perceive, a diversity of sentiment respecting the benefits and the consequences, which may flow from the free and immediate use of the Mississippi. My opinion of this matter has been uniformly the same, and no light in which I have been able to consider the subject is likely to change it. It is, neither to relinquish nor to push our claim to this navigation; but in the mean while to open *all* the communications which nature has afforded, between the Atlantic States and the Western Territory, and to encourage the use of them to the utmost. In my judgment it is a matter of very serious concern to the well being of the former, to make it the interest of the latter to trade with them; without which, the ties of consanguinity which are weakening every day will soon be no bond, and we shall be no more a few years hence to the inhabitants of that country, than the British and Spaniards are at this day; not so much indeed, because commercial connexions, it is well known, lead to others, and united, are difficult to be broken; and these must take place with the Spaniards, if the navigation of the Mississippi is opened.

Clear I am that it would be for the interest of the Western settlers, as low down the Ohio as the Big Kanhawa, and back to the Lakes, to bring their produce thro' one of the channels I have named; but the way must be cleared, and made easy and obvious to them, or else the ease with which people glide down stream will give a different bias to their thinking and acting. Whenever the new States become so populous and so extended to the westward, as really to need it, there will be no power which can deprive them of the use of the Mississippi. Why then should

we prematurely urge a matter, which is displeasing and may produce disagreeable consequences, if it is our interest to let it sleep? It may require some management to quiet the restless and impetuous spirity of Kentucke, of whose conduct I am more apprehensive in this business, than I am of all the opposition that will be given by the Spaniards. Mrs.

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Washington and George and his wife join me in compliments and good wishes to your lady. With great esteem &c.89

To MRS. SAMPSON DARRELL

June 18, 1786.

Madam: A tract of land which I bought of Captn. Johnston (your deceas'd husband) lying on Bullskin in Frederick (now Berkeley) county, is, as well as a great many others, comprehended in the judgment lately obtained in the General Court in favor of the Hires; but may, it is said, be relieved from the consequences if it shall appear that this land was originally purchased from Hite. That the fact is so there can be no doubt, but the difficulty lies in proving it. It would seem by some papers in my hands that Captn. Johnston bought this land, wch. he sold me from one Lewis Thomas; and that Lewis Thomas bought it of old Jost

89. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

Hite, father of the present complainants, who passed his Bond for the conveyance; which bond it further appears was assigned to Captn. Johnston. Now, if this bond is to be found among the papers of Captn. Johnston, for I have it not, it will render null and void the claim of the Hites; unless it may be for the original purchase money (which was very trifling), if it cannot be proven that it has been paid.

But if this bond is not in being, it is highly probable the Land will be lost.

The person to whom I sold this land is now calling upon me, this will oblige me in turn to resort to the representatives of Capt. Johnston of whom I purchased, and whose Deeds to me warrant it against the claim of every person whatsoever. But all these difficulties (except as to the original sum, which was to have been paid by Lewis Thomas to Hite) may be avoided if you fortunately should find among Captain Johnston's papers, the

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original bond from Hite to Thomas for conveyance of the land. It is for this reason I give you the trouble of the present application.

I am informed that commissioners are to meet some day this month, to receive such evidence as can be offered in favor of the present possessors of the land, without which the judgment will be final, I therefore pray that diligent search may be made for Hites Bond, which may prevent a heavy loss, as the land, with the improvements thereon, is now become very valuable. I am, etc.⁹⁰

90. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To PIERRE FRANÇOIS COZETTE

Mount Vernon, June 19, 1786.

Sir: The Letter which you did me the honor of writing to me, of the 5th. of Feby., I have received. I am highly oblig'd to you for the compliment which you pay me in desiring my acceptance of a portrait of Lewis the fifteenth, on horse back, which [was] done by you and is at your disposal.

I have not the least doubt Sir, but that the performance does honor to your abilities, and I join with you in wishing that it might be placed in some public and conspicuous situation, where the world could be gratified by seeing the picture of a good King, and where the merit of the performer meet with the applause which is due to it. Upon this principle Sir, (though I feel a grateful sense of the honor which you intended me) I must beg leave to decline the acceptance of it, as it could not here be placed in that conspicuous point of view which would do it justice. I am, etc.⁹¹

91. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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On June 19 Washington wrote also to Comte de Grouchet, referring his application for membership in the Society of the Cincinnati to the Society in France. This letter is entered in the "Letter Book."

To NICHOLAS PIKE⁹²

Mount Vernon, June 20, 1786.

Sir: Your letter of the 25th. of March did not come to hand 'till lately, or it should have had an earlier acknowledgment.

It gives me the highest satisfaction to find the Arts and sciences making a progress in any Country; but when I see them advancing in the rising States of America, I feel a peculiar pleasure, and in my opinion, every effort of genius and all attempts towards improving useful knowledge ought to meet with encouragement in this Country. Your performance is

92. New Hampshire teacher and arithmetician.

of the most useful and beneficial kind, and from the opinion of those Gentlemen who have inspected it, I have not the least doubt but that it is a very valuable one.

I feel a grateful sense of the honor which you designed me by wishing to dedicate your Book⁹³ to me, and would even sacrifice my own ideas of propriety respecting the matter, so far as to comply with your request, if I thought that by a non-compliance I should discourage, so good a work. But Sir, as there are several characters in your part of the country who deservedly hold a high rank in the literary world, and whose names would add dignity to such performance; it would be more proper (if I might presume to offer my opinion upon the matter) to dedicate your book to them.

I must therefore beg leave to decline the honor which you would do me, as I have before done in two or three cases of a similar kind.

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With the sincerest wishes for the success of your work, and much esteem, I am, etc.⁹⁴

93. *A New and Complete System of Arithmetic, Composed for the Use of the Citizens of the United States*, published in 1788.

94. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To DAVID HUMPHREYS

Mount Vernon, June 20, 1786.

My Dr. Humphreys: Your letter from New York (as did the proceeding one from London) came duly to hand, and claim my particular acknowledgments. On your return to America I sincerely congratulate you, and shall rejoice to see you at this place, which soon expecting shall add little at this time.

The only end of this letter is to assure you, that you will have *no* occasion for Horses, for mine will always be at your service; and very little for a servant, as your old acquaintance Will, who is scarcely fit for anything else, can whiten your head, and many idlers about the house can blacken your shoes. But in the latter case I entreat you to be governed altogether by your inclination and convenience.

Not knowing to what place to direct for you, I send this letter under cover to Colo. Lee.

Mrs. Washington, and George and his wife join me in every good wish for you, and I am, etc.⁹⁴

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, June 21, 1786.

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Dear Sir: Enclosed is a copy of my last. It is so long since it was dispatched (without an acknowledgment of it) that I begin to fear some accident must [*sic*] happened, altho' it was sent to the Post Office in Alexandria by a very safe hand. Should this be the case, I pray you to notify the Office of the loss of the Certificate

94. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

which was inclosed, that neither principal nor interest may be paid to the bearer till an investigation of his, or her claim to it, is first had. For this reason I send you an exact copy of the certificate, taken from the original before it was inclosed and wish that every proper step may be taken to recover it.

Not being able to discover how the letter should get lost, and still hoping it is not, I do not, at this time, send you patterns for the glass then required, but will do so if necessary as soon as I hear from you. I am etc.

[H.S.P.]

To JOSEPH DASHIELL⁹⁵

Mount Vernon, June 21, 1786.

Sir: I thank you for requesting a skipper from the Eastern shore to call upon, and make me an offer of the posts and rails he had for sale. They were not however of a kind to answer my purposes (being for paling), nor should I incline to buy any unless they are *better* and are to be had *cheaper* than those wch. might be taken from my own land. To judge of the propriety of this, you wou'd oblige me Sir, by informing me on what terms Cypress posts 7 feet long, 5 inches by 6 at top, and 7 inches by 6 at bottom; (a stock a foot square making 4), and Cypress plank 12 feet long, 6 wide and 1¼ inches thick, could be had delivered at my landing, supposing 500 of the first, and a proportional

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95. Of Salisbury, Md.

quantity of the latter for rails. I mention cypress on a supposition that it is a lasting wood for posts; but would be glad to know *also* , what the difference in price would be, between cypress and Pine, in the rails *only* . I am, etc.⁹⁶

To THORNTON WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, June 22, 1786.

Dr. Thornton: Jnn. Throckmorton delivered me your letter of the 6th. inst: I am under no apprehension that the title to the land on which you live can be affected by the decision lately had in favor of Messrs. Hite and others. Such papers as I can readily find respecting this tract, I send you. The patent from the proprietors office, granted to Captn. George Johnston of whom I bought the land particularly recites that it was granted by Jost Hire to Lewis Thomas, the deposition of John Smith taken, and admitted in the former trial, and I suppose is of record, with the copy of Lewis Thomas's bond passed for the payment thereof, together with the statement subscribed by Colo. Grayson, places the whole business in my opinion in a very clear and unequivocal point of view. But if the Commissioners (which I can scarcely conceive) should be of a different way of thinking, I should be glad to have time to illucidate matters more fully.

Colo. Grayson you will perceive certifies that what he has signed is a true copy from the proceedings; in these it is expressly admitted by the complainants, that Js. Hite

96. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

did sell 425 acres; which upon a resurvey (possibly by adding a little of the barrens) measured 552 acres. Not having the original bond from Jost Hite to Lewis Thomas in my possession, I sent to the widow Darrell, formerly wife of Captn. Johnston, to see if it could be found among his papers; but she was from home and not likely, my messenger was

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informed, to return soon, and very probably may be found as a deposit in the proprietors, as the Deed is expressly founded upon it. In my judgment it is quite immaterial where it is, as there is, besides admission of the papers, the most uncontrovertible evidence of the sale to Thomas. By L. Thomas's bond to lost Hire, it appears that the money was to have been paid, "at such time, that the said lost Hite, his Heirs, Exors, Admrs or Assigns can obtain a good patent from the office."

The only point therefore which can be disputed, according to my conception of the case, is, if the purchase money has *never* yet been paid, who is liable, the possessors of the land, or the persons to whom it was sold, or their representatives? Whether the decree of the Court goes to this point, or what powers are vested in the Commissioners respecting it I know not, never having seen the judgment, and having had but a very indistinct report of it.

The Ship with servants happening to be becalmed opposite to my door, I sent on board to enquire for a Carpenter; only one stood upon the list, and he professing not to understand much of the business, I concluded he understood nothing of it, and

therefore did not buy him for you.

My best wishes attend you and your wife. I am, etc.⁹⁷

To GEORGE WILLIAM FAIRFAX

Mount Vernon, June 26, 98 1786.

My Dr. Sir: Since I had the honor of writing to you in Novr. last I have been favored with your letters of the 23d. of June in the last, and 23d. of January in the present year, the first was handed to me by Doctr. Baynham,⁹⁹ and the other by James Bloxham.

Your conjectures respecting the fate of our letters, are, I am persuaded, too well founded, such frequent miscarriages would not result from negligence alone. But why, after the

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prying eye of curiosity, or the malignant hope of trappanning an individual, or making useful discoveries were disappointed, the letters should not have been permitted to proceed to their address, is not easy to be conceived. Being well apprized of the delicacy of your situation, I have studiously avoided every expression in all my letters which might if known, have involv'd you in the smallest difficulty or embarrassment; it is wantonly unfeeling therefore to destroy as well as to have inspected those which were founded in friendship only, and have the occurrences which relate to the parties for their basis. In future I will always place my letters to you under cover to Mr. Athawes.¹

I have already informed you that Mr. Pine's reception in this Country has been favorable, and indicative of a profitable harvest in

97. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

98. Sparks prints this letter under date of June 25.

99. Dr. William Baynham, of Essex County, Va.

1. Samuel Athawes, of London.

the line of his profession. Consequent of your good report of this gentleman, I furnished him with letters to many of the first characters in Philadelphia and Annapolis; and have every reason to believe that his success will be at least equal to his expectation, if it is not injured by any act of his own; against which his own prudence no doubt will guard him.

Tho' envy is no part of my composition, yet the picture you have drawn of your present habitation and mode of living is enough to create strong desires in me to be a participator of the tranquillity and rural amusements you have described. I am getting into the latter as fast as I can, being determined to make the remainder of my life easy, let the world or the affairs of it go as they may. I am not a little obliged to you for the assurance of contributing to this, by procuring me a Buck and Doe of the best English deer; but if you

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have not already been at this trouble, I would my good Sir, now wish to relieve you from it, as Mr. Ogle² of Maryland has been so obliging as to present me six fawns from his park of English deer at Belle air. Of the Forest deer of this Country, I have also procured six, two bucks and four does; with these, and tolerable care, I shall soon get into a full stock for my small paddock. I do not mean to comprehend in this relinquishment, the offer of my good friend Mrs. Fairfax. I will receive with great pleasure and gratitude the seeds of any trees or shrubs wch. are not natives of this country, but reconcilable to the climate of it,

2. Benjamin Ogle.

that she may be so obliging as to send me; and while my attentions are bestowed on the nurture of them, it would, if anything was necessary to do it, remind me of the happy moments I have spent in conversations on this and other subjects with that Lady at Bellvoir.

My friend in New England having, since the date of my letters to you in Novr., engaged a young gentleman for me of very decent appearance and respectable family, as a tutor for the two little Custis's living with me, I have to pray that the trouble I was about to give you on this occasion may cease, and that the letter which I put under your cover for a Mr. Chapman, may be burnt.

I have now my Dr. Sir, to beg you to accept my particular thanks for the early attention which you paid to my request respecting a Farmer, and for directing James Bloxham to offer himself to me before he should engage with any other. The character given of him by Mr. Peacey³ is full and ample, and his appearance and conversation being much in his favor, I have agreed to give him sixty guineas pr. ann: for his services, and find him and family in provisions, a house to live in, a garden to work and two Cows to furnish them with milk. In consequence thereof he has written for his wife and children to come to him. With his assistance and advice, I shall be able to dispense with a steward. I have now taken the

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management of my farms into my own hands, and shall find employment and amusement, if not profit, in conducting the business of them myself.

The post-script to your letter of the 23d. of Jany., has given me pain; it would seem from the tenor of it as if you conceived I was not well pleased at your giving Mr. Thos. Corbin a letter of introduction to me: be assured My Dr. Sir, no idea was ever

3. William Peacey.

more foreign to my feelings; my intention, however incautiously the sentiment might have been expressed, was only to inform you that his brother Dick had determined to play nothing short of the whole game, and therefore was resolved to be as early with his narrative in this Country as Tom could be. And now, whilst I am upon this subject, let me once for all entreat you not to be scrupulous or backward in your introductions in future; for I can assure you with much truth, that every occasion which affords the means of hearing from you and Mrs. Fairfax will give pleasure in this family, and no person who shall come with your passport will be an unwelcome guest in it. So many come here without *proper* introductions, that it is a real satisfaction when I am able to discriminate: this will be the case whenever Mr. Ansty or any other shall present a letter to me from you. My manner of living is plain. I do not mean to be put out of it, a glass of wine and a bit of mutton are always ready, and such as will be content to partake of them are welcome those who expect more will be disappointed, but no change will be affected by it.

With compliments and best wishes for Mrs. Fairfax, I am, etc.⁴

4. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To RICHARD SPRIGG

Mount Vernon, June 28, 1786.

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Dr. Sir: When your favor of the 1st. inst: accompanying the she ass, came to this place, I was from home; both however arrived safe, but Doctr. Bowie informed me by letter, that the bitch puppy was not brought to his house, nor have I heard anything more of the asses which were at Marlboro', nor of the grass seeds committed to the care of Mr. Digges.⁵

I feel myself much obliged by your polite offer of the first fruits of your Jenny. Tho' in appearance quite unequal to the match, yet, like a true female, she was not to be terrified at the disproportionate size of her paramour, and having renewed the conflict twice or thrice, it is to be hoped the issue will be favourable.

My best respects attend Mrs. Sprigg and the rest of your family. With great esteem and regard, I am, etc.

To DOCTOR WILLIAM BROWN

Mount Vernon, June 30, 1786.

Sir: In answer to your favor of the 27th. written at the request of the Trustees of the Alexandria Academy, I have the honor to inform you that the education of boys for the purposes mentioned in my letter of the 17th. of December, was what I had principally, if not wholly in view at that time. But if it shall appear to the Trustees that there are girls who may fitly share

5. George Digges.

the benefits of the institution, I will readily comprehend them in a ratio not to exceed one girl for four boys. With esteem and regard, I am, etc.⁶

To GEORGE WILLIAM FAIRFAX

Mount Vernon, June 30, 1786.

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My Dr. Sir: Better late than never, is an adage not less true, or less to be respected because it is old. The letter I am now about to write to you, ought to have been written sometime ago; but however strange it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that I have not had leisure (tho' more than two years have elapsed since my return to what the world calls retirement) to overhaul papers and to inspect transactions which preceeded the Revolution.

Having abundant reason to distrust my memory, I did not incline to write to you fully respecting the trust with which you had invested me, 'till I cou'd go into a thorough examination of all the papers to which it had given birth; that I might not only satisfy you in the best manner the nature of the case would admit, but myself also with respect to the transactions. How, me thinks I hear you say, could the inspection of these papers, be a work of so much time? It would not indeed Sir, if the papers had been properly arranged, and my time had been at my own

6. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

disposal: but a house never clear of company, a continual reference to me of old matters (with which I ought not to have been troubled), and correspondencies without number, following several hasty removals of my papers from Bookpresses to trunks and thence into the country, when the British armed vessels would make their appearance, had thrown the whole into such a jumble and confusion that I could scarce come at any of them.

I have now taken up the business from your letter of the 1st. of Jany. 1773, with which it commenced, and having gone thro' all the papers respecting it from that date to the present moment; I am exceedingly sorry to find that the greater part of it has been managed so little for your interest and so repugnant to my wishes as it appears to have been. 'Till my Country called my services to the field, in which I spent almost nine years, I acted in every respect for you as I should have done for myself. But after bidding adieu to my family and home, to which I never expected to return if the smiles of Heaven should

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prove unpropitious, a general wreck of my affairs as well as yours, took place. Aware of the probability that this would happen, I perceive by the copy of a letter which I wrote to you from Cambridge the 26th. of July 1775. (so soon as I had taken the command of the army), that I informed you in strong terms, of the indispensable necessity of appointing another attorney, as I could not from my then situation, give any attention to private concerns. A little before that, from Philadelphia, in a letter of the 31st. of May, I enclosed you sundry bills as I then mentioned; and have ever since thought were to the full amount of what I owed you, 'till the late investigation of the papers hath discovered that I am yet indebted to you in the sum of £169:12.6. for goods bought at

your sale the 15th. of August 1774, and £31:11:9. for those purchased at the subsequent one on the 5th. of Decr. following; which, with some other credit, make the sum which is due to you £207:13:0½.

That I should have informed you in that letter, that the remittances were to the full amount of what I then owed, is easily accounted for and was proper at that time; because the sums just mentioned did not become due (according to the conditions of the sale) 'till twelve months thereafter: but why it shou'd not have occurred to me afterwards, is more difficult to solve, and is of no great importance now to attempt; yet I can assure you with the sincerest truth, that 'till within these few days, I thought the accounts between us were so near a balance, as to render it of little importance when they were exhibited. I was led into this belief from two circumstances: first, having omitted to credit you in my Ledger by the amot. of my purchases at the sale, I wanted that remembrance of the fact which a variety of occurrences and close attention to other matters, had entirely obliterated. 2dly., by having recurrence to the copies of my last letters to you, written after I had left home, and which were always present, I was deceived by the information there given that the remittances were compleat.

The enclosed accot. commencing with the balance of the former, does I believe, comprehend everything between us. For the balance I give you a Draft on Wakelin Welch

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Esqr. of London. I have drawn this at the *legal* exchange as settled by act of Assembly, tho' the currt. exchange

is 40 pr. Ct., which would have reduced the bill to £148.6.5. I have allowed no interest on what I am owing you; the reasons I will frankly communicate, if they are not satisfactory, it may be drawn for hereafter. 1st. Even if there had been any person appointed by you to have receieved the money from me when it became due, I could not have reconciled it to my conscience to have paid the nominal sum in paper bills of credit; (which was the only money then in circulation) thereby giving the *shadow* for the substance of a debt. 2d. because I am in a manner rendered unable to do it by the ungenerous, not to say dishonest practices of most of my debtors who paid me with a shilling or six pence in the pound; by wch. and other means, I have sustained a loss of at least ten thousand pounds during my absence; and 3d. because my Creditors let their claims rest 'till the annihilation of paper money, and are now receiving (as indeed every person ought to do) specie, or an equivalent to the full amount. A mode so unequal has pressed hard upon me, under the deprivation of crops, and want of a market for the little that was raised.

The Bonds which were taken at the sales before mentioned, were put into the hands of Mr. Craven Peyton to collect as appears by his Rect. to Lund Washington of the 7th. of April 1776; a copy of which I will send Colo. Geo. Nicholas, that he may see how they have been accounted for, as I will also do the rect. from the same person for Colo. Stephens's7 Bond for £230, and Majr. McDonald's8 for £56. dated the 14th. Jany. 1774. The other bonds remain where you informed me they were deposited, subject to the conditions and directions pointed to in your letter of the 10th. of January 1774.

With respect to your book-debts, my letters of the 10th. of June, 20th. of August and 15th. of November 1774. will have informed you of

7. Col. Adam Stephen.

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8. Maj. Angus McDonald.

the difficulties which then occurred in every attempt that was made to collect the balances, and these increased as often as they were renewed: nothing therefore could be done without going into the Courts of justice, which, soon thereafter were shut and not opened before I left home; after which, upon the first intimation of your wish that Robt. Carter Nicholas esqr., or Colo. Fielding Lewis might be empowered to direct your affairs, I addressed both these gentlemen on the subject. The latter on account of his declining state of health, desired to be excused; and from the former I have never got an answer. Equally unsuccessfull was I in my application to his son, after I had heard of his entering upon the trust, when I informed him of the papers that were in my possession which might be necessary for his government. In April last however, I saw Colo. Nicholas in Richmond, and repeating what I had before written, he assured me that every attempt to recover debts that were not reduced to specialities, was altogether unavailing; but that he would direct your manager (Mr. Muse) to receive the Book, papers &c. from me. As they were not necessary for any purposes he could have, and no inconvenience would attend their remaining with me (for they are in your own Escritoir) I thought it better and desired they should remain here, which Colo. Nicholas readily consented to. Here then they will remain 'till you may think proper otherwise to dispose of them. No settlement having been made of the bloomery⁹ accot. by Messrs. Adam and Campbell before I left home, tho' the matter was repeatedly pressed as appears by

9. Iron works.

letters, I was restrained by your instructions of the 31st. of March 1774, from executing Deeds for the land belonging to that concern; and Colo. Carlyle's¹⁰ bond depending upon this settlemt. (as you will perceive by the letter before alluded to) remains as it did; for I have heard nothing of this business since my return.

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Among other papers which I have found in my researches, is the enclosed letter from Saml. Athawes Esqr. As it is of no use here, but may serve to compare with the transactions of that date relative to your Estate in England, I send it. The pictures, for directions concerning which I asked in my letter of the 20th. of Augt. 1774, were, (not having received them before my departure) left standing at Belvoir, and unfortunately perished with the House.

For the furniture of the blue room, which had been removed to this place (out of the moths way) during my absence, I intended to allow whatever you might think it was worth, for we were, it seems, under the necessity of using it: but as it was used under an expectation of paying for it, I am willing and ready to do it.

Among the papers in my possession, is a sealed packet, endorsed, "A copy of G: W, Fairfax's last will and testament, which he begs may not be opened until his death is confirmed, or a subsequent one is produced." It shall remain sealed as desired, and safe unless you should incline to recall it.

I might my Dr. Sir, have gone more into the detail of this business. I might have given you the correspondencies between your Steward, and your Collector and myself; and between myself and others respecting your business; but from the recurrence which I have had to the copies of my letters to you, I perceive it is sufficient to refer to them. The letters of the 25th. of Septr. 15th of Octr. and 30th. of Decr. 1773, 10th. of May, 10th. of June, 20th. of Augt. and 15th. Novr. 1774;

10. Col. John Carlyle.

and 6th. of April and 31st. May 1775,¹¹ previous to my taking command of the American forces, contain a full and accurate accot. of every thing that had occurred relative to your business which had fallen under my notice. They transmitted copies of the accots. which had been rendered to me by your steward and Collector; they enclosed bills which had

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been purchased with your money, and they gave an accot. of all the monies which had been paid by me for your use. And my letter of the 26th. of July 1775¹² informed you of my then situation; the impracticability of my giving further attention to your business, and the indispensable necessity of your employing another attorney. From that period until my return to Virginia in the beginning of the year 1784, I remained in total ignorance of your business, and had *nearly* as little knowledge of my own. How much my [own] suffered in that space, I have already informed you; and I have reason to suspect, from what I have heard, that yours was not under the best management.

Willis, with his family, has removed to the State of Georgia; and Peyton is dead, but all those matters you have doubtlessly been informed of in a more regular and authentic way by Colo. Nicholas With sentiments of great regard and friendship. I am, etc.¹³

11. Drafts of the letters of June 10, 1774, and of May 31, 1775, only are now found in the *Washington Papers*. (See Washington's letters to George William Fairfax, June 10, 1774, and May 31, 1775, *ante* (vol. 3).

12. See Washington's letter to George William Fairfax, July 26, 1775, *ante*.

On July 15, 1786, Washington placed this letter under a cover, with a brief note to Samuel Athawes, a copy of which note is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*; but it is likely that this date is an error of the "Letter Book" copyist, and that it should be July 1.

13. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To WILLIAM FITZHUGH¹⁵

Mount Vernon, July 2, 1786.

Dear Sir: Your letter without date was handed to me last night by your servant. With one of your mares, he returns, the other I detain: the latter was among the very few which were

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early favoured by the Spaniard, but is not yet satisfied. The other, which went to Magnolio, my Groom seems confident is with foal, which is the reason of my sending her.

A female ass which I have obtained lately, has excited desires in the Jack, to which he seemed almost a stranger; making use of her as an excitement, I have been able to get several mares served, which otherwise would have gone uncovered by him this season: this expedient, unluckily, was hit upon too late for me, as I had put almost the whole of my mares to Magnolio before it was tried; it will be practised with your mare that is left, and I hope with success.

I have advised your Servant to try the mares he carries back by some horse in your neighbourhood, and if she should discover an inclination to him, to bring her to Magnolio when he returns for the other. If this should not happen before the latter end of this month when I shall send to Mr. Reynolds for the ewe Lambs, I will contrive your mare that far, unless you forbid it in the interim.

I am much obliged to my good friend Perry for the trouble he is about to take by his enquiries for ewe lambs for me; and will give him an answer the moment he advises me of the result, which I shall be enabled to do as soon as I hear from Genl. Smallwoods manager, who sent me word that there were a number of Lambs belonging to the Genls. Estate, which he believed were to be disposed of; about which he was desired to

15. Of Patuxent, Md.

enquire and to let me know when the Govt. came into Charles Coty. which has happened.

I am much obliged to you for the sample of Barley. Mine that I sowed this Spring is come to nothing; occasioned I believe by the continual rains.

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I am very sorry to hear of your long confinement by the fall you got in this State, but glad to find you are beginning to overcome it. With every good wish for Mrs. Fitzhugh, yourself and family, I am, etc.¹⁶

To THOMAS JOHNSON

Mount Vernon, July 8, 1786.

Dear Sir: It was not 'till our return to the great Falls, that Colo. Gilpin and myself discovered the error of the propos'd meeting of the Directors of the Potomac Company at Alexandria on Monday preceding the first day of August. The general Meeting of the Company it seems is, by Law, to be held on the first Monday in that month; and this not happening, in the present year, 'till the 7th. day of it, we wish that the Meeting of Directors may take place on the Saturday before; of which I pray you to give Mr. Lee notice. I am, etc.¹⁷

16. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

17. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To EDMUND RANDOLPH

Mount Vernon, July 12, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Your letter of the 7th. is this instant come to hand. Elizabeth and Sarah, daughters of Michl. Cresap, live I presume in Hampshire, to the Sheriff of which I will direct the summons, tho' it is at a hazard, having no other knowledge of the matter, than that their mother married one Jacobs of that county. Luther Martin lives in Maryland, and is I believe Attorney General of that State. What is to be done in this case?

I am exceedingly sorry to hear of your indisposition and loss. I hope the change of air and exercise which you are about to take will restore you to perfect health. Be assured I shall

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have singular pleasure in seeing you at this place as you return from, or go to Annapolis, being with great esteem and regard, Dr. Sir, etc.¹⁷

17. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JAMES TILGHMAN

Mount Vernon, July 20, 1786.

Dr. Sir: It will readily appear to you from the manner and evident marks of hurry with which the letter I had the honor to address you last, was written, that it was only meant for your own perusal; but if the contents of it can afford any satisfaction to the gentleman who you say is anxious to be informed of the truth of the insinuations which have met Capt: Asgill's countenance, I have no objection to its being handed to him under the prohibition you have mentioned; for if that gentleman conceives that such tales will excite commiseration, he may be indulged in them 'till the touch stone of time and truth will reverberate upon him. I have already informed you that my letter was written from memory. I am persuaded, nevertheless, that nothing is contained therein, wch. is not founded on facts; and that more might have been said to disprove the alligations.

I am really sorry that it is not in my power yet, to give you any satisfaction respecting the affairs of Colo. Thos. Colville's Estate;¹⁸ and of what can be done with the claim of Miss Anderson. No man can be more anxious than I am to bring these matters to *such a close* as will satisfy all parties, and exonerate myself. It is now many months, since I have pressed the eldest son, and I believe one of the Exors of Mr. John West deceas'd, who was the principal acting Exor of T. Colvill, to furnish me, if he would not take the matter in hand himself, with all the papers of that Estate, that a

18. On May 18, 1786, Washington receipted, at Mount Vernon, to Thomas Moody, for £95:13s. of specie money of Virginia "in part payment of a Bond given to me as Exect. of the Will of Thos. Colvil Esqr. deceased, by Mr. Benjn. Moody his late father, with

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Messrs. Josiah Watson and James Hendricks as Securities thereto, for three hundred and Twenty nine pounds dated the 19th of Novr. 1781." A photostat of this receipt, through the kindness of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, of New York City, is in the *Washington Papers*.

final settlement upon some principle or another might be gone into. He always promised, but has never performed this, two months ago, he assured me I should have these papers in three weeks; at the end of which, I again applied and was as unsuccessful as before. His last assurance was, that he would bring them himself in a little time.

As the concerns of this Estate have been intermixed and blended with Jno. Colvill's affairs, to whom Thomas was an Exor, and as both are in great confusion and perplexity, I mean as soon as I can get the papers, to put the whole into the hands of some gentleman of abilities and knowledge of the Law, to overhaul, digest and advise what is proper to be done in every matter for the fulfilment of the trust, and towards a final settlement: the result of which, so far as it respects Miss Anderson, you shall be informed of, so soon as I can speak with any decision on this point; for at present I am perhaps as ignorant as you can be of the concerns of these Estates, and of what is proper to be done in behalf of the Legatees &c. I am, etc.¹⁹

To HENRY L. CHARTON

Mount Vernon, July 22, 1786.

Sir: The rude draughts herewith enclosed will, in some degree, comply with your request; because it will shew the shape of the lands about which you have been treating. The Ship by which they are sent, heaving in sight before

19. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

I had notice of its coming, I could do no more than send them in the unpolished state in which they are now handed to you.

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The descriptions and situations of them you already have.

It may not be amiss to repeat, that the price set upon these lands, was on the supposition that the whole were to be taken; if part only is wanted (if I consent to separate them at all) the price by the acre, according to its situation and value, will be encreased; for to be relieved of the trouble of seating them was my principal motive and only inducement to offer them at a price which I conceived to be much under their intrinsic value. I have the honor, etc.²⁰

To HENRY LEE

Mount Vernon, July 26, 1786.

My Dr. Sir: Your favors of the 3d. and 11th. inst: are both at hand. The last came first, and first only two clays ago. The Books by Mr. Griffith are also received, and came in good order. My thanks for your kind intention of giving me the use of them 'till you return to Virginia are sincerely offered. Youngs Tour thro' Ireland, I had myself purchased when in New York; and I have just received advice of the others at Annapolis, which I had been expecting, and had given you the trouble

20. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

of enquiring after.

I am much obliged to you for the information respecting the China which is for sale in New York, with the order of the Cincinnati engraved on it; if it should not be disposed of before this letter reaches you, and you think a ready and safe conveyance can be had for it to Alexandria or this place, I would thank you for buying it for me. In this case, pray let me know the exchange between New York and London at 60 days sight, and I will by return of the post, give you a good Bill for the sterlg. amount of the 150 Dollars: or, by means of

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some of the merchts. in Alexandria who have connexions in New York, I will forward an order on that place to that amot.

If I stopped short of your ideas respecting the navigation of the Mississippi, or of what may be the opinions of Congress on this subject, it was not for want of coincidence of sentiment, but because I was ignorant at that time of the rubs which are in the way of your commercial treaty with Spain, and because I thought some address might be necessary to temporize with, and keep the settlement of Kentucky in state of quietness. At this moment that settlement is formidable, population is rapidly encreasing there. There are many ambitious and turbulent spirits among its inhabitants, who from the present difficulties in their intercourse with the Atlantic States, have turned their eyes to New Orleans, and may become riotous and ungovernable, if the hope of traffick with it is cut off by treaty. Notwithstanding if this cession is counterpoized, it may be a more favourable time for Congress to speak decisively to them, than when they have got stronger, but not sufficiently matured to force the passage of the Mississippi themselves; whilst the plans which are in agitation for opening

communications with that territory, may, if successful, unfold to them new prospects, mutually beneficial to the old and new States.

All those matters, no doubt, will be duly considered by Congress, and a decision had on which ever side the advantages preponderate.

It was with very sincere regret I received the news of Genl. Greene's death.²² Life and the concerns of this world one would think are so uncertain, and so full of disappointments, that nothing is to be counted upon from human actions. Adieu, with sentiments of great regard and affection, I am etc.²³

To WILLIAM GRAYSON

Mount Vernon, July 26, 1786.

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Dear Sir: It is a fact that your favor of the 27th. of May was long getting to me; but why it happened so, I am unable to inform you; as I generally send to the Post Office in Alexandria twice in every week.

Is it not among the most unaccountable things in nature that the representation of a great Country shou'd, generally, be so thin as not to be able to execute the functions of Government?²⁴ To what is this to be ascribed? Is it

22. Nathanael Greene died June 19, 1786, at the age of 44.

23. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

24. Representation in Congress.

the result of political manoeuvre in some States, or is it owing to supineness, or want of means?

Be the causes what they may, it is shameful and disgusting. In a word it hurts us, our character as a nation is dwindling; and what it must come to if a change should not soon take place, our enemies have foretold; for in truth we seem either not capable, or not willing to take care of ourselves.

For want, I suppose, of competent knowledge of the Connecticut claim to Western territory, the compromise which is made with her, appears to me to be a disadvantageous one for the union; and if her right is not, one of the motives (according to your account) for yielding to it, in my humble opinion, is exceedingly dangerous and bad; for upon such principles, *might* , not *right* , must ever prevail, and there will be no surety for anything.²⁵

I wish very sincerely that the Land Ordinance may answer the expectations of Congress. I had, and still have my doubts of the utility of the plan, but pray devoutly, that they may never be realized, as I am desirous of seeing it a productive branch of the Revenue. That

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part which makes the waters and carrying places common highways, and free for all the States, is certainly valuable.

I thank you for the other articles of information; such as you have disclosed confidentially, you may rest assured will proceed no further, 'till it becomes public thro' other channels; and this shall always be the case with paragraphs which are so marked. The answer to the Memorial of Mr. Adams by Lord Carmarthen, I have seen at large. It was impolitic and unfortunate, if it was not unjust in these States to pass laws, which by fair construction might be considered as infractions of the treaty of peace.

It is good policy at all times, to place one's adversary in the wrong. Had we observed good

25. Grayson had written (May 27) that Connecticut offered to cede all her claim to the Western Territory, reserving however 120 miles between the ceded lands and the Pennsylvania line; "this cession was at first much opposed, but Congress have at length agreed to accept it whenever the delegates of that State shall be authorized to make a proper deed." The consequence of this, Grayson thought, would be a loss to the United States of 6,000,000 acres, which had already been ceded by Virginia and New York. "The advocates for this measure, urged...that the claim of a powerful State although unsupported by right, was under present circumstances a disagreeable [desirable?] thing; and that sacrifices ought to be made for the public tranquility." Grayson's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

faith, and the western Posts had then been withheld from us by G: Britain, we might have appealed to god and man for justice, and if there are any guarantees to the treaty, we might have called upon them to see it fulfilled.²⁶ But now we cannot do this; tho' clear I am, that the reasons assigned by the British Ministry are only ostensible, and that the Posts, under one pretence or another, were intended to have been detained, tho' no such Acts had ever passed: but how different would our situation have been under such circumstances? With very sincere regard and affection, I am, etc.²⁷

To MAUDUIT DU PLESSIS

Mount Vernon, July 28, 1786.

Sir: It is with great pleasure I take the earliest opportunity of acknowledging the receipt of the letter you did me the honor to write to me from New York on the 20th. inst:, accompanied by an original letter from Mr. le Marquis de la Fayette, and by the copy of one from Mr. le Comte d'Estaing.

Such ample testimonials of merit from such distinguished characters, cannot fail to ensure you the most grateful reception throughout America in general; but permit me Sir, to add for myself

26. By the VIIth article of the Treaty of Peace, the western posts held by the British within United States territory were to be evacuated. By the IVth article, every facility was to be allowed to British subjects to collect the debts due to them in the several States. Lord Carmarthen charged that obstacles had been thrown in the way of collecting such debts, through recent laws enacted by some of the States, and that the IVth article had been violated by the United States. He stated that in retaliation these posts would not be given up.

27. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

in particular, that I shall be unfeignedly happy in receiving you under the peaceful shades of Mount Vernon, and in seeking occasions to render you any services which it may be in my power to offer.

In the meantime (as I hope soon to have the pleasure of seeing you personally) I will content myself with felicitating you on your safe arrival in the United States, while I congratulate my Country on the acquisition of so valuable and dignified a Citizen.

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With sentiments of perfect esteem and consideration I have the honor, etc.²⁸

To THOMAS SMITH

Mount Vernon, July 28, 1786.

Sir: It would be more tiresome than interesting to assign reasons for my not having acknowledged the receipt of your letters of the 26th. of Novr. and 7th. of Feby., 'ere this. It may be sufficient to inform you, that they came duly to hand, tho' I had not the pleasure of seeing Majr. McCormick²⁹ whilst he was in Virginia, which I regretted, as I might have derived useful information from him respecting the views and expectations of the occupants of my Land in Washington county; at the same time I might possibly have engaged him, or some other thro' him, who would have made it a point to bring forward such testimony as would evince, that pre-occupancy of the tract in dispute, was in me.

28. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

29. Maj. George McCormick.

Without this I *may* fail in this particular, as it is not frequently found that people volunteer their services upon these occasions; but, on the contrary, that they generally hang back, from a desire of living (the idea is) in peace with their neighbours. For this reason I must refer you to the information given in my former letters; with a request that the evidences there named may be summon'd (if you think it necessary) to prove what has been advanced.

The instances of decision, of wch. you have made minutes in your letter of the 20th. of Novr., in the western Courts, are indicative of a favourable determination of my Suit, and I would not depart from the legal ground on which I claim; yet as an auxiliary, the proof of pre-occupancy would drive my opponents from what they conceive to be their strong hold; for it is on this, (before what they call *legal* steps were taken by me) that

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they, I am persuaded, rest their cause: but why *all of them* should take this ground, when *most of them* emigrated to the Country after the date of my patent, is misterious, and may comprehend more than I am aware of; for which, among other reasons, if I cou'd be ascertained of the precise time for the trial, I would endeavour to attend; especially as I have other calls in that Country, among which, to dispose of that Land if the decision is favorable for me, and of my other tract where Simpson formerly lived, are most important.

I have considered your remarks, and wish it was in my power to solve your Doubts; my answers shall be candid, tho' the explanations may be unfavorable.

However strange it may seem, the fact nevertheless is, that Posey's³⁰ Warrant was not dated 'till the 25th. day of Novembr. 1773, (posterior, according to my opponents accot., to their settlemt.), this knowledge I have but lately obtained, and am exceedingly surprized at the fact, as the right was bought by me for this express purpose two or three years before, as you may perceive by the date of the Bond which is now in your possession: this circumstance it is necessary to apprise you of, that if known to the Defendants you may be guarded against the force of it, as that the date of Colo. Hyoidean deputation is subsequent to their pretended settlement. The proof to the hand writing of Posey, I have already furnished you with.

I believe there has been no entry in the Surveyors Book of this tract; for I can find nothing there preceeding the record of the Survey; to what to ascribe this I know not, except to a neglect of office, or to the unacquaintedness of Colo. Crawford with business: the presumption however is, that the preceeding steps to the issuing of the Patent, were legal and such as satisfied this government, under whose jurisdiction it was: and this Government having stipulated in its cession to Pennsylvania that the grants she had made, should be secured to the Grantees. I cannot conceive upon what ground the validity of mine can be questioned without arraigining the conduct of a sister State in the management of her own business.

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The Council books, as I have before informed you, were either destroyed by the enemy, or so mislaid as that no access can be had to them; it is not in my power therefore to furnish you with an authenticated copy of the Proclamation which takes off the restriction in that of 1763.

If you should hear of any persons wanting to buy improved Lands in the Counties

30. John Posey.

of Fayette or Washington, I would thank you for letting them know that mine (as already mentioned) are for sale. I wish you for no more than the real value of them, and if you could help me to fix this by comparison with the prices of Lands of equal quality, similarity of improvements and with the same advantages, in these Counties, it would oblige me. I would make the payments (being well secured) easy to the purchaser.

I should be glad to hear that this letter had got safe to your hands; an acknowledgement of it via Philada. or Baltimore, with direction to put it into the Post Office, will be most certain of a conveyance. I am, etc.³¹

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, July 30, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Majr. Gibbes handed me your letter of the 24th. ulto. with the accounts enclosed. Necessity alone ought to compel me to loose the difference between £50:18.9. and 339 53/90 Dollars; because the last mentioned sum (but a very little while since) was, if I recollect rightly considered as the *specie* value of the Commissary's Certificates for which it was issued by Mr. Stelle,³² and

31. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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32. Benjamin Stelle. He was Pennsylvania commissioner for settling accounts.

was accordingly so settled by the scale of depreciation. Notwithstanding, as I am entirely unacquainted with the fund upon which this certificate has issued, and what it may ultimately tend to, I must repeat my wish that you would act for me in this case, as you wou'd do for yourself. Laying out of the money will be no inducement to my selling the Certificate at an under value, if it is thought that it will finally be good, and the interest can be received in the mean while. But as I never made paper money a study, having had nothing to do with any, except old continental, (by which I have lost very considerably) I must rely upon your judgment more than any direction I could give for the disposition of Stelle certificates always remembering that I am to give others credit for one moiety of what it would really fetch in specie, and that their Accots. are to be credited by what you shall say to me on this head, it would sell for.

When Blankets, Osnabrigs, Linens of any kind, Paints, loaf Sugar, Coffee, best Hyson Tea, or either of them may happen to be low at the wholesale or Vendue stores in Philada., you would do me a kindness by giving the information; because if I should not happen to be supplied at the time, I would immediately commission you to make a purchase for me.

Do the Tanners in Philadelphia make Leather which is strong, stout and well adapted for negroes shoes? If so, what could twenty five sides of each (unblackened) or as much as would make 150 pair, with three soles, be bought for?

Be so good as to forward the enclos'd by a safe conveyance: the one to Mr. Smith respects a Law suit I have in the Western Country, the miscarriage, or delay of which might be injurious to me. My compliments to Mrs. Biddle, with esteem, I am, etc.³³

***To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

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Mount Vernon, July 31, 1786.

My dear Count: I have been duly honored with the two letters you were pleased to address to me in the months of Jany and March last: I need scarcely tell you that your communications always afford me the sincerest gratification; because they are always replete with the most friendly sentiments; because they insensibly bring to remembrance some circumstances of that pleasing and important period we so happily passed together, and because you frequently have it in your power to give such informations, as in my present retirement from the busy and political world cannot fail of being acceptable to me.

It must give pleasure to the friends of humanity even in this distant section of the globe to find that the clouds, which threatned to burst in a storm of War on Europe, have dissipated and left a still brighter political horizon. It is also to be hoped, that something will turn up to prevent, even at the death of the Elector of Bavaria or the King of Prussia, the effusion of human blood, for the acquisition of a little territory.

As the rage of conquest,

33. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

which in the times of barbarity, stimulated Nations to blood, has in a great degree ceased; as the objects which formerly gave birth to Wars are daily diminishing; and as mankind are becoming more enlightened and humanized, I cannot but flatter myself with the pleasing prospect that more liberal policies and more pacific systems will take place amongst them. To indulge this idea affords a soothing consolation to a philanthropic mind, insomuch that altho' it should be founded in illusion, one would hardly wish to be divested of an error, so grateful in itself and so innocent in its consequences.

The Treaty of Amity which has lately taken place between the King of Prussia and the United States, marks a new æra in negotiation. It is perfectly original in many of its articles. It is the most liberal Treaty which has ever been entered into between independent

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Powers; and should its principles be considered hereafter as the basis of connection between nations, it will operate more fully to produce a general pacification than any measure hitherto attempted amongst mankind. Superadded to this, we may safely assert, that there is at present less war in the world than ever has been at any former period.

The British continue to hold the Posts ceded by the late Treaty of Peace to the U.S. States. Each of these powers does not hesitate to criminate the other, by alledging some infractions of that Treaty. How the matter will terminate time must disclose. Everything remains tranquil on this side of the Atlantic, except that the Savages sometimes commit a few trifling ravages on the frontiers. General Green lately died at Savanna in Georgia. The Public, as well as his family and friends, has met with a severe loss. He was a great and good man indeed. With sentiments of the purest esteem etc.³⁴

34. From the original in the *Rochambeau Papers* in the Library of Congress.

To BARON DE HOLKENDORFF

Mount Vernon, July 31, 1786.

Sir: The letter of the 4th. of June 1785 which you was pleased to address to me by Colo. Senff,³⁷ has very lately been put into my hand; in answer to which I have the honor to observe, that having divested myself of an official character and retired to private life, I can have no agency whatever in matters of a public nature. This, I thought, had been made known extensively enough by the manner of my resignation and retirement. The want of being acquainted with these facts seems however, to have involved some gentlemen at a distance in unnecessary and unavailing applications. All therefore, that I have it in my power to advise you on the two objects of your letter, is, that application for admittance into the Society of the Cincinnati, must be either to the Society of the State in whose line the officer served; or, if the officer was a foreigner, to the Society in France; and that with respect to pecuniary claims, recourse must be had either to the Paymaster General, or

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Secretary for the Department of War. With due consideration and regard I have the honor, etc.³⁸

37. Christian Senff, formerly a colonel in the South Carolina State troops.

38. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To DUC DE LAUZUN

Mount Vernon, July 31, 1786.

Monr. le Duc: I have had the honor to receive your letter to me of the 25th. of Augt. 1785. by the hand of Mr. Michau,³⁵ of whom it was introductory. The scientific object which occasioned the voyage of that gentleman to America, his personal character, and the recommendation of the Duke de Lauzun, conspired to make me extremely happy in forming an acquaintance with him. I should be made still more so by his complete success in his botanical pursuits. Any assistance in my power will be most chearfully accorded as a tribute to his merit, and as a demonstration of the attachment and esteem with which I have the honor, etc.³⁶

To ANTOINE FELIX WUIBERT DE MÉZIÈRES

Mount Vernon, July 31, 1786.

Sir: I have been favored with the receipt of triplicate copies of your polite letter dated at Cape-francois the 15th. of Novr. last.

While you do me the justice to acknowledge the zeal with which I desired and attempted to promote the interest of all the individuals composing the army I had formerly the honor to command; permit me to express my regret that, from peculiar circumstances, I had it not more fully in my power to attain that desirable object.

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It was doubtless the intention of

35. André Michaux, French botanist.

36. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

Congress to establish funds for the punctual payment of the interest as it became due on the public securities given to the officers and Soldiers of the Army for arrearages of pay and commutation: Their designs however have hitherto been unfortunately frustrated by the delinquency of some of the States, which could not be induced to comply with their requisition of 5 pr Cent impost. All the States in the Union have at length granted that impost, but there are still some difficulties respecting the collection &c. Whenever these can be removed, it is to be hoped the interest will be regularly paid on your Certificates. In the meantime Congress are taking measures for surveying the Lands ceded to them; out of wch. the officers and Soldiers will undoubtedly receive what has been promised.

Having, as you know sir, long since retired from all public employment, I have it not in my option to interfere with public measures by making recommendations. Indeed I do not think it probable that any Corps of Engineers will be established at present. But I am very happy in all events to find that you are so agreeably situated with an old acquaintance and friend.

As to medals and Diplomas for the Cincinnati, the former I believe are to be purchased in Philada., and the latter to be obtained thro' the State Society of wch. an officer is member. I have none of either at my disposal. With sincere wishes for your health and happiness, I remain, etc.³⁹

39. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To WAKELIN WELCH

Mount Vernon, July, 1786.

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Sir: Since my last of the 28th. of Novr. I have been favored with your letters of the 27th. of Feby. and 13th. of March; and have received the paper hangings and watch by Capt. Andrews. With the last Mrs. Washington is well pleased, and I thank you in her name for your attention to the making of it.

If the stocks keep up, and there is not a moral certainty of their rising higher in a short time, it is my wish and desire, that my interest in the Bank may be immediately sold, and the money arising therefrom made subject to my Drafts in your hands, some of which, at sixty days' sight, may soon follow this letter.

The footing on which you have placed the interest of my debt to you, is all I require. To stand on equal ground with others who owe money to the Merchants in England, and who were not so prompt in their payment of the principal as I have been, is all I aim at. Whatever the two Countries may finally decide with respect to interest; or whatever general agreement or compromise may be come to between British Creditors and American Debtors, I am willing to abide by; nor should I again have touched upon this subject in this letter, had you not introduced a case which, in my opinion, has no similitude with the point in question. You say I have received interest at the Bank for the money which was there, granted: but (besides remarking that only part of this money was mine) permit me to ask if G. Britain was not enabled, by means of the bank, to continue the war with this Country? Whether this war did not deprive us of the means of paying our Debts? And whether

the interest I received from this source did, or could bear any proportion to the losses sustained by having my grain, my Tobacco, and every article of produce rendered unsalable and left to perish on my hands? However, I again repeat, that I ask no discrimination of you in my favor, for had there been no stipulation by treaty to secure debts, nay more, had there even been an exemption by the Legislative authority, or

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practice of this Country against it, I would, from a conviction of the propriety and justice of the measure, have discharged my *original* debt to you.

But from the moment our ports were shut, and our markets were stopped by the hostile fleets and armies of Great Britain, 'till the first were opened, and the others revived, I should, for the reasons I have (though very cursorily) assigned, have thought the interest during that epocha stood upon a very different footing. I am much obliged by the trouble you have taken to enquire into the nature of the connexion between the House of Messrs. Hanbury & Co. and Balfour & Barraud. I had no sanguine hopes of redress from that quarter, but as it seemed to be the *only* chance, I was willing to try it. I am etc.⁴⁰

40. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE

Mount Vernon, August 1, 1786.

Dear Sir: The letter you did me the honor to write to me on the 3d. of Feby., has come safely to hand. Nothing could be more satisfactory to me than the friendly sentiments contained in it, and the generous manner in which you always interest yourself in the happiness and dignity of the United States. I wish I had it in my power to inform you that the several States had fully complied with all the wise requisitions which Congress has made to them on national subjects. But unfortunately for us, this is not yet the case. Altho' for my own part I do not cease to expect that this just policy will ultimately take effect. It is not the part of a good Citizen to despair of the republic: nor ought we to have calculated, that our young Governments would have acquired, in so short a period, all the consistency and solidity, which it has been the work of ages to give to other nations. All the States however, have at length granted the impost; tho' unhappily some of them have granted it under such qualifications, as have hitherto prevented its operation. The greater part of the Union seems to be convinced of the necessity of foederal measures, and of investing Congress with the power of regulating the commerce of the whole. The reasons you offer

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on this subject are certainly forcible, and I cannot but hope will 'ere long have their due efficacy.

In other respects our internal Governments are daily acquiring strength. The laws have their fullest energy; justice is well administered; robbery, violence or murder is not heard of from Nw. Hamp

shire to Georgia. The people at large (as far as I can learn) are more industrious than they were before the war. (Economy begins, partly from necessity and partly from choice and habit, to prevail. The seeds of population are scattered over an immense tract of western country. In the old States, wch. were the theatres of hostility, it is wonderful to see how soon the ravages of war are repaired. Houses are rebuilt, fields enclosed, stocks of cattle which were destroyed are replaced, and many a desolated territory assumes again the cheerful appearance of cultivation. In many places the vestiges of conflagration and ruin are hardly to be traced. The arts of peace, such as clearing rivers, building bridges, and establishing conveniences for travelling &c. are assiduously promoted. In short, the foundation of a great Empire is laid, and I please myself with a persuasion, that Providence will not leave its work imperfect.

I am sensible that the picture of our situation, which has been exhibited in Europe since the Peace, has been of a very different complexion; but it must be remembered that all the unfavorable features have been much heightened by the medium of the English newspapers thro' which they have been represented. The British still continue to hold the Posts on our frontiers, and affect to charge us with some infractions of the Treaty. On the other hand we retort the accusation. What will be the consequences, is more than

I can pretend to predict. To me, however, it appears, that they are playing the same foolish game in commerce that they have lately done in War; that their ill-judged impositions will eventually drive our ships from their ports, wean our attachments to their manufactures, and give to France decided advantages for a commercial connexion with us. To strengthen

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the alliance and promote the interests of France and America will ever be the favorite object of him, who has the honor to subscribe himself, with every sentiment of attachment, &c.42

To THE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mount Vernon, August 1, 1786.

Dr. Sir: I have to thank you very sincerely for your interesting letter of the 27th. of June, as well as for the other communications you had the goodness to make at the same time. I am sorry to be assured, of what indeed I had little doubt before, that we have been guilty of violating the treaty in some instances. What a misfortune it is the British should have so well grounded a pretext for their palpable infractions: and what a disgraceful part, out of the choice of difficulties before us, are we to act.

Your sentiments, that our affairs are drawing rapidly to a crisis, accord with my own. What the event will be, is also beyond the reach of my foresight. We have errors to correct;

42. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

we have probably had too good an opinion of human nature in forming our confederation. Experience has taught us, that men will not adopt and carry into execution measures the best calculated for their own good, without the intervention of a coercive power. I do not conceive we can exist long as a nation without having lodged some where a power, which will pervade the whole Union in as energetic a manner, as the authority of the State Governments extends over the several States.

To be fearful of investing Congress, constituted as that body is, with ample authorities for national purposes, appears to me the very climax of popular absurdity and madness. Could Congress exert them for the detriment of the public, without injuring themselves in an equal or greater proportion? Are not their interests inseparably connected with those of

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their constituents? By the rotation of appointment, must they not mingle frequently with the mass of Citizens? Is it not rather to be apprehended, if they were possessed of the powers before described, that the individual members would be induced to use them, on many occasions, very timidly and inefficaciously for fear of losing their popularity and future election? We must take human nature as we find it: perfection falls not to the share of mortals. Many are of opinion that Congress have too frequently made use of the suppliant humble tone of requisition, in applications to the States, when they had a right to assert their imperial dignity and command obedience. Be that as it may, requisitions are a perfect

nihilism where thirteen sovereign independent disunited States are in the habit of discussing and refusing compliance with them at their option. Requisitions are actually little better than a jest and a bye word throughout the land. If you tell the Legislatures they have violated the Treaty of Peace, and invaded the prerogatives of the confederacy, they will laugh in your face. What then is to be done? Things cannot go on in the same train forever. It is much to be feared, as you observe, that the better kind of people, being disgusted with the circumstances, will have their minds prepared for any revolution whatever. We are apt to run from one extreme into another. To anticipate and prevent disastrous contingencies, would be the part of wisdom and patriotism.

What astonishing changes a few years are capable of producing. I am told that even respectable characters speak of a monarchical form of Government without horror. From thinking proceeds speaking, thence to acting is often but a single step. But how irrevocable and tremendous! what a triumph for our enemies to verify their predictions! what a triumph for the advocates of despotism to find that we are incapable of governing ourselves, and that systems founded on the basis of equal liberty are merely ideal and fallacious! Would to God that wise measures may be taken in time to avert the consequences we have but too much reason to apprehend.

Retired as I am from the world I frankly acknowledge I cannot feel myself an unconcerned spectator. Yet, having happily assisted in bringing the Ship into Port, and having been

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fairly discharged; it is not my business to embark again on a sea of troubles. Nor could it be expected, that my

sentiments and opinions would have much weight on the minds of my Countrymen; they have been neglected, tho' given as a last legacy in the most solumn manner. I had then perhaps some claims to public attention. I consider myself as having none at present. Mrs. Washington joins me in compliments, etc.⁴³

***To THOMAS JEFFERSON**

Mount Vernon, August 1, 1786.

Dear Sir: The letters you did me the favor to write to me on the 4th. and 7th. of Jany. have been duly received. In answer to your obliging enquiries respecting the dress, attitude &ca. which I would wish to have given to the Statue in question, I have only to observe that not having sufficient knowledge in the art of sculpture to oppose my judgment to the taste of Connoisseiurs, I do not desire to dictate in the matter; on the contrary I shall be perfectly satisfied with whatever may be judged decent and proper. I should even scarcely have ventured to suggest that perhaps a servile adherence to the garb of antiquity might not be altogether so expedient as some little deviation in favor of the modern costume, if I had not learnt from Colo. Humphreys

43. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On August 1 Washington signed agreements with Thomas Mahony, as a carpenter, for one year and Cornelius McDermott Roe, as a stonemason and bricklayer, for one year. These agreements are in the *Washington Papers*.

that this was a circumstance hinted in conversation by Mr. West⁴⁴ to Houdon. This taste, which has been introduced in painting by West, I understand is received with applause and prevails extensively.

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I have taken some pains to enquire into the facts respecting the medals of the Cincinnati, which Majr. L'Enfant purchased in France. It seems that when he went to Europe in 1783 he had money put into his hands to purchase a certain number, and that conceiving it to be consonant with the intentions of the Society, he purchased to a still greater amount; insomuch that a Committee of the Genl. Meeting, upon examining his Acct. reported a balle. due to him of Six hundred and thirty dollars, wch. report was accepted. This money is still due, and is all that is due from the Society of the Cincinnati as a Society. General Knox has offered to pay the amount to Majr. L'Enfant, but as it has become a matter of some public discussion, the latter wished it might remain until the next Genl Meeting, which will be in May next. In the mean time Genl. Knox (who is Secretary Genl) has, or will write fully on the Subject to the Marquis de la Fayette, from whom he has had a letter respecting the business.

We have no News of importance. And if we had, I should hardly be in the way of learning it; as I divide my time between the superintendence of opening the navigations of our rivers and attention to my private concerns. Indeed I am too much secluded from the world to know with certainty, what sensation the refusal of the British to deliver up the Western posts, has made on the public mind. I fear the edge of its sensibility is somewhat blunted. Fœderal measures are not yet universally adopted. New York, wch. was as well

44. Benjamin West.

disposed a State as any in the Union is said to have become in a degree antifoederal. Some other States are, in my opinion, falling into very foolish and wicked plans of emitting paper money. I cannot however give up my hopes and expectations that we shall 'ere long adopt a more just and liberal system of policy. What circumstances will lead, or what misfortunes will compel us to it, is more than can be told without the spirit of prophecy. In the meantime the people are industrious, œconomy begins to prevail, and our internal governments are, in general, tolerably well administered.

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You will probably have heard of the death of Genl Greene before this reaches you, in which case you will, in common with your Countrymen, have regretted the loss of so great and so honest a man. Genl. McDougall, who was a brave Soldier and a disinterested patriot, is also dead;⁴⁵ he belonged to the Legislature of his State, the last act of his life, was (after being carried on purpose to the Senate) to give his voice against the emission of a paper currency. Colo. Tilghman, who was formerly of my family, died lately and left as fair a reputation as ever belonged to a human character. Thus some of the pillars of the revolution fall. Others are mouldering by insensible degrees. May our Country never want props to support the glorious fabrick! With sentiments of the highest esteem etc.⁴⁶

45. Alexander McDougall died June 8, 1786.

46. From the original in the *Jefferson Papers* in the Library of Congress.

To JOHN MARSDEN PINTARD

Mount Vernon, August 2, 1786.

Sir: Since my last to you, the Industry Captn. Gibson is arrived, but from the length of the voyage most of the articles you had the goodness to send me have perished. The Figs were entirely lost, so were all the Malmsey grape. Of the Muscat and Vera., some showing signs of feeble life; I have with great care and attention recovered two of the cuttings. These have now put forth leaf, and I hope will do well.

The wines with which I was furnished by Messrs. Searle & Co. are of a very good quality, and came to hand in very good order, and supplied, I dare say, upon as good terms as they could have been had from any other House on the Island; these considerations, added to such as you have mentioned, will I am persuaded, induce me to give it the preference, especially, as from the purport of your letter, you must be connected therewith.

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The negotiations which have been set on foot by Congress with the piratical States⁴⁷ will, it is to be hoped, put an end to the apprehensions with which the American trade is labouring, from the conduct of those barbarians towards it. I am, etc.⁴⁸

47. The Barbary States.

48. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To LAMAR, HILL, BISSETT & COMPANY

Mount Vernon, August 3, 1786.

Gentn: Your favors of the 6th. and 17th. of December came duly to hand; and I have also received from Norfolk the pipe of Madeira wine which you addressed to the care of Doctr. Taylor of that place for my use. I have not yet tasted it, but presume it is fine: it ought to be so, for the cost of it in the Island, besides the extra charges here, is £7.12.4 pr. pipe more than the wines I had from Messrs. Searle & Co. in April 1783; than which none, I think, could be better, for it was old, and of an excellent quality.

I remit to Henry Hill Esqr. of Philada. a draft⁴⁹ for £43:12:4 on Wakelin Welch Esqr. of London, which is the amot. of your order on me in favor of the above gentleman. I am, etc.⁴⁸

49. On August 3 Washington also wrote Henry Hill, inclosing the above-mentioned draft. This note is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

48. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To WAKELIN WELCH

Mount Vernon, August 5, 1786.

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Sir: Arthur Young Esqr. of Bury, in Suffolk, having been so obliging as to offer to procure for me Implements of Husbandry, seeds &c., I have accepted his kindness with much pleasure, because he is a competent judge of the first, and will be careful that the latter are good of their several kinds, a thing of much consequence, and which does not often happen

with seeds imported into this Country from Europe.

I have requested him to forward these articles to your care, and to draw upon you for the amount. Let me entreat your particular attention to them, with a request that the Captn. of the Vessel on board which they are shipped may be solicited to keep the seeds in the cabin, or out of the Ship's hold at any rate, as they never fail to heat and spoil when put there. I am, etc.⁵⁰

To WAKELIN WELCH

Mount Vernon, August 5, 1786.

Sir: On the other side is a copy of my letter to you of this date under cover to Arthur Young Esqr. of Bradford Hall, near Bury in Suffolk. The articles which I have written to him for are,

2 ploughs, with spare shares and Coulters; and a mould to form others on.

A little of the best kind of cabbage seed for field culture.

20 lb. of best Turnip seeds.

10 bushels of Sainfoin seeds.

8 Do of the Winter Vetches.

2 Do of Rye-grass Seeds.

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50 lb. of Hop clover seed; and a little Burnet seed, if it is in estimation with Farmers.

Perhaps he may add a few seeds of other kinds, perhaps he may encrease the quantities above, and possibly add some other

50. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

instruments of Husbandry, tho' I have written for none, nor have I reason to expect any unless he may be disposed to send very useful ones without waiting a request. It is also possible, tho' I have very little expectation of its happening, that he may engage me a common plough-man.

Your paying the cost of these things and forwarding them in a vessle for Potomac, will much oblige me; as it will to convey the letters herewith enclosed, to their respective addresses. I am, etc.⁵¹

To WILLIAM PEACEY

Mount Vernon, Virginia, August 5, 1786.

Sir: Excuse the liberty I take in putting the inclosed Letters under cover to you. It is to oblige Mr. James Bloxham who now lives with me, but who scarcely has sufficient knowledge of his own mind to determine whether to continue more than the present year (for which he is engaged) or not. In a word he seems rather to have expected to have found well organized farms, than that the end and design of my employing him was to make them so. He makes no allowances for the ravages of a nine year's war from which we are but just beginning to emerge, nor does he consider that if our system of Husbandry had been as perfect as it may be found on your Farms, or in some of the best farming Counties in England, that there

51. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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would have been no occasion for his Services.

What the old man has written to you respecting the coming over of his wife, sending over plows, seeds and so forth, I know not; because at different times he seems to be of different opinions. I can only add therefore, if his family are to come, and by the way of London, that it would be well for some person in their behalf to open a correspondence with Messrs. Forrest and Stoddart Merchans, of that place, who have Ships that pass by my door in their way to Alexandria, and would render the passage in one of them much more convenient, and less expensive than to any other place; tho in a Vessel bound to Norfolk in this State, (Virginia,) or to Annapolis, Baltimore, or Patuxent in the neighbouring one of Maryland, it would not be very inconvenient. In case of her coming, whatever Implements, Seeds, &c. may be requested by Mr. Bloxham on my Acct. had better be paid for by his Wife, and settled for here.

I am sorry to be thus troublesome, but as Mr. Bloxham considers you as his Benefactor, and Friend, has addressed one of his Letters to you, and his Wife, if she finally resolves to come, will stand in need of advice and assistance, it is necessary that the best mode should be suggested. A ship from Bristol to either of the places above named, may, probably, be more convenient than the rout by London, but of this you can judge better than I. I am etc.⁵²

52. From the text kindly furnished by Forest G. Sweet, of Battle Creek, Mich. It varies from the "Letter Book" copy in minor verbal details only.

***To ARTHUR YOUNG**

Mount Vernon, August 6, 1786.

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Sir: I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 7th. of Jany. from Bradford-Hall, in Suffolk, and thank you for the favor of opening a correspondence, the advantages of which will be so much in my favor.

Agriculture has ever been amongst the most favourite amusements of my life, though I never possessed much skill in the art, and nine years total inattention to it, has added nothing to a knowledge which is best understood from practice; but with the means you have been so obliging as to furnish me, I shall return to it (though rather late in the day) with hope and confidence.

The System of Agriculture (if the epithet of system can be applied to it), which is in use in this part of the United States, is as unproductive to the practitioners as it is ruinous to the land-holders. Yet it is pertinaciously adhered to. To forsake it; to pursue a course of husbandry which is altogether different and new to the gazing multitude, ever averse to novelty in matters of this sort, and much attached to their old customs, requires resolution; and without a good practical guide, may be dangerous; because, of the many volumes which have been written on this subject, few of them are founded on experimental knowledge, are verbose, contradictory, and bewildering. Your Annals shall be this guide. The plan on which they are published, gives them a reputation which inspires confidence; and for the favor of sending them to me, I pray you to accept my very best acknowledgments. To continue them, will add much to the obligation.

To evince with what avidity, and with how little reserve I embrace the polite

and friendly offer you have made me of supplying me with "Men, Cattle, Tools, Seeds, or anything else that may add to my rural amusement", I will give you, Sir, the trouble of providing, and sending to the care of Wakelin Welch, Esqr. of London, Mercht. the following articles.

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Two of the simplest, and best constructed Plows for land which is neither very heavy nor Sandy. To be drawn by two horses. To have spare shares and Colters; and a mold or which to form new irons when the old ones are worn out, or will require repairing.

I shall take the liberty in this place to observe, that some years ago, from a description, or recommendation of what wa then called the Rotheram; or Patent Plow, I sent to England for one of them, and till it began to wear, and was ruined by a bungling Country Smith that no plow could have done better work, or appeared to have gone easier with two horses; but for want of a mold (wch. I had neglected to order with the Plow), it became useless after the irons which came in with it were much worn.

A little of the best kind of Cabbage-seeds, for field culture.

20 lbs. of the best Turnip-Seeds, for Do.

10 Bushels of Sainfoin Seeds

8 Bushls. of the Winter Vetches.

2 Bushls. of Rye-grass Seeds.

50 lbs. of Hop clover seeds, and If it is decided (for much has been

said for and against it), that Burnet, as an early food, is valuable, I should be glad of a bushel of this seed also.

Red clover seeds are to be had on easy terms in this Country, but if there are any other kinds of grass-Seeds (not included in the above) that you may think valuable, especially for early feeding or cutting, you would oblige me by adding a small quantity of the seeds, to put me in stock: Early grasses, unless a species can be found that will stand a hot

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Sun, and oftentimes severe droughts in the summer months, without much expence of cultivation, would suit our climate best.

You see, Sir, that without ceremony, I avail myself of your kind offer; but if you should find in the course of our correspondence, that I am likely to become troublesome you can easily check me. Inclosed I give you an order on Wakelin Welch Esqr. for the cost of such things as you may have the goodness to send me. I do not at this time ask for any other implements of Husbandry than the Plows; but when I have read your annals (for they are but just come to hand) I may request more. In the meanwhile, permit me to ask what a good Plowman might be had for, annual wages, to be found (being a single man) in board, washing, and lodging? The writers upon Husbandry estimate the hire of labourers so differently in England, that it is not easy to discover from them whether one of the class I am speaking of would cost Eight, or Eighteen pounds a year. A good Plowman at low wages, would come very opportunely with the Plows here requested.

By means of the application I made to my friend Mr. Fairfax, of Bath, and through the medium of Mr. Rack,⁵³ a bailiff is sent to me, who, if he is acquainted with the best courses of cropping, will answer my purposes as a director or Super

53. Edmund Rack. He was secretary of the Agriculture Society of Bath, England.

intendant of my Farms. He has the appearance of a plain honest Farmer; is industrious; and, from the character given of him by a Mr. Peacy (with whom he has lived many years) is understanding in the management of Stock, and of most matters for which he is employed. How far his abilities may be equal to a pretty extensive concern, is questionable. And what is still worse, he has come over with improper ideas; for instead of preparing his mind to meet a ruinous course of cropping, exhausted Lands, and numberless inconveniences into which we had been thrown by an eight years War, he seems to have expected that he was coming to well organized Farms, and that he was to have met Plows, Harrows, and all the other implements of Husbandry in as high taste

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as the best farming Counties in England could have exhibited them. How far his fortitude will enable him to encounter these disappointments, or his patience and perseverance will carry him towards the work of reform, remains to be decided. With great esteem etc.⁵⁴

54. From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, of New York City.

To CHARLES ARMAND-TUFFIN

Mount Vernon, August 10, 1786.

Dr. Marquis: I am to acknowledge the receipt of the agreeable letter you did me the honor to write to me on the 20th. of Jany., and at the sametime to congratulate you on the happy event announced in it.

Permit me to assure you that nothing affords me more satisfaction than to receive good news of my friends; and you must allow me the liberty of considering your marriage to an amiable lady, with a handsome fortune, in that point of light.

Indeed I was not surprized at this, because I knew the merits of the Marqs. de la Rouerie entitled him to such a connexion. But I must confess, I was a little pleased, if not surprised, to find him think quite like an American on the subject of matrimony and domestic felicity. For in my estimation more permanent and genuine happiness is to be found in the sequestered walks of connubial life, than in the giddy rounds of promiscuous pleasure, or the more tumultuous and imposing scenes of successful ambition.

This sentiment will account, in a degree, for my not making a visit to Europe: other reasons may conspire to prevent me from enjoying the heart-felt satisfaction I shou'd experience in embracing my friends on that continent. Their kind sollicitude and invitations are, however, entitled to my cordial acknowledgments; and you may be persuaded, it will not be among the least of my regrets on this occasion, that the circumstances preclude me

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from receiving the *welcome* , and witnessing the *happiness* , I should expect to meet with at the Chateau de la Rouerie.

I enter so little into disquisitions and politics, that I could hardly do justice

to the subject, should I undertake to dilate upon it. I have understood, in general, that Congress have taken arrangements for the payment of the interest due on Securities given to foreigners who served in their Army. A timely and efficacious application to the States will, I hope, in future produce more punctuality, and supercede the necessity of any interference on my part, which it appears to me would be improper on many accounts.

Mrs. Washington desires her compliments may be acceptable to Madame la Marquise de la Rouerie and yourself; with a similar request, I have the honor, etc.⁵⁵

To JOHN FRANCIS MERCER

Mount Vernon, August 12, 1786.

Dr. Sir: The Clerks notes in the Suits ordered by you on the Bonds taken at Colo. Geo: Mercer's sale, are (many of them) brought against me; some of wch. without adverting thereto, I have paid, supposing them to have arisen on distresses made by Mr. Muse for my Rents. A few days ago a Bill from the Clerk, I believe, of Berkeley, was handed to me amounting to near six hundred pounds of Tobacco, which not being convenient for me to pay, was returned. I shall

55. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

be obliged to you in future when writs are ordered, to direct these notes into some other channel. I am threatened also (as you may see by the enclosed) in another manner on the same Accot.

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I am led from these circumstances to hope that the suits have been, or soon will be productive; for, tho' painful to reiterate, the fact is that I am *really* in want of money. The almost total loss of my Corn last year, the scantiness of my Crop of Wheat this (in which I am only a common sufferer), and the probable destruction of my Corn by the Chinch-bug, in which I stand almost alone, deprives me of all hope of aid from these sources; which is the more distressing to me as I am at this time involved in more than common expence to finish my house and to make the repairs which were found wanting when it come to be examined. I am, etc.⁵⁶

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Mount Vernon, August 15, 1786.

My dr. Marqs: I will not conceal that my numerous correspondencies are daily becoming irksome to me; yet I always receive your letters with augmenting satisfaction, and therefore rejoice with you in the measures which are likely to be productive of a more frequent intercourse between our two nations. Thus, motives of a private as well as of a public nature conspire to give

56. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On August 14 Washington signed an agreement with James Lawson to do ditching at Mount Vernon. This agreement is in the *Washington Papers*.

me pleasure, in finding that the active policy of France is preparing to take advantage of the supine stupidity of England, with respect to our commerce.

While the latter by its impolitic duties and restrictions is driving our Ships incessantly from its harbours; the former seems by the invitations it is giving to stretch forth the friendly hand to invite them into its Ports. I am happy in a conviction, that there may be established between France and the U.S., such a mutual intercourse of good offices and reciprocal

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interests, as cannot fail to be attended with the happiest consequences. Nations are not influenced, as individuals may be, by disinterested friendships; but, when it is their interest to live in amity, we have little reason to apprehend any rupture. This principle of union can hardly exist in a more distinguished manner between two nations, than it does between France and the United States. There are many articles of manufacture which we stand absolutely in need of and shall continue to have occasion for so long as we remain an agricultural people, which will be while lands are so cheap and plenty, that is to say, for ages to come.

In the mean time we shall have large quantities of timber, fish, oil, wheat, Tobo., rice, Indigo, &c. to dispose of: Money we have not. Now it is obvious that we must have recourse for the Goods and manufactures we may want, to the nation which will enable us to pay for them by receiving our Produce in return. Our commerce with any of the great manufacturing Kingdoms of Europe

will therefore be in proportion to the facility of making remittance, which such manufacturing nation may think proper to afford us. On the other hand, France has occasion for many of our productions and raw materials; let her judge whether it is most expedient to receive them by direct importation and to pay for them in goods; or to obtain them thro' the circuitous channel of Britain and to pay for them in money as she formerly did.

I know that Britain arrogantly expects we will sell our produce wherever we can find a market and bring the money to purchase goods from her; I know that she vainly hopes to retain what share she pleases in our trade, in consequence of our prejudices in favor of her fashions and manufactures; but these are illusions, which will vanish and disappoint her, as the dreams of conquest have already done. Experience is constantly teaching us, that these predilections were founded in error. We find the quality and price of the French goods we receive in many instances, to be better than the quality and price of the English. Time, and a more thorough acquaintance with the business may be necessary to instruct

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your merchants in the choice and assortment of Goods necessary for such a Country. As to an ability for giving credit, in which the English merchants boast a superiority, I am confident it would be happy for America if the practice could be entirely abolished.

However unimportant America may be considered at present, and however Britain may affect to despise her trade, there will assuredly come a day, when this country will have some weight in the scale of Empires. While connected with us as Colonies only, was not Britain the first power in the World? Since the dissolution of that connexion, does not

France occupy the same illustrious place? Your successful endeavors my Dr. Marqs., to promote the interests of your two Countries (as you justly call them) must give you the most unadulterated satisfaction: be assured the measures which have lately been taken with regard to the two Articles of *Oil* and *Tobacco* , have tended very much to endear you to your fellow Citizens on this side of the Atlantic.

Altho' I pretend to no peculiar information respecting commercial affairs, nor any foresight into the scenes of futurity; yet as the member of an infant empire, as a Philanthropist by character, and (if I may be allowed the expression) as a Citizen of the great republic of humanity at large; I cannot help turning my attention sometimes to this subject. I would be understood to mean, I cannot avoid reflecting with pleasure on the probable influence that commerce may hereafter have on human manners and society in general. On these occasions I consider how mankind may be connected like one great family in fraternal ties. I indulge a fond, perhaps an enthusiastic idea, that as the world is evidently much less barbarous than it has been, its melioration must still be progressive; that nations are becoming more humanized in their policy, that the subjects of ambition and causes for hostility are daily diminishing, and, in fine, that the period is not very remote, when the benefits of a liberal and free commerce will, pretty generally, succeed to the devastations and horrors of war.

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Some of the late treaties which have been entered into, and particularly that between the King of Prussia and the Ud. States, seem

to constitute a new era in negotiation, and to promise the happy consequences I have just now been mentioning. But let me ask you my Dr. Marquis, in such an enlightened, in such a liberal age, how is it possible the great maritime powers of Europe should submit to pay an annual tribute to the little piratical States of Barbary? Would to Heaven we had a navy able to reform those enemies to mankind, or crush them into non-existence.

I forbear to enter into a discussion of our domestic Politics, because there is little interesting to be said upon them, and perhaps it is best to be silent, since I could not disguise or palliate where I might think them erroneous. The British still hold the frontier Posts, and are determined to do so. The Indians commit some trifling ravages, but there is nothing like a general or even open war. You will have heard what a loss we have met with by the death of poor Genl. Greene. General McDougal and Colo. Tilghman are also dead.

It is a great satisfaction to have it in my power to pay some attention to Monsr. Du Plessis, by whom I had the happiness of receiving your last letter: he is now at Mount Vernon on his way to Georgia.

You will see by the length to which I have extended this letter, that I can never find myself weary of conversing with you. Adieu, My Dr. Marqs. Mrs. Washington and the family desire to be most respectfully presented to Made. de la Fayette, to whom, I pray you also to offer my very best homage; and to believe that I am etc.⁵⁹

59. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THEODORICK BLAND

Mount Vernon, August 15, 1786.

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Dear Sir: By Colo. Fitzhugh I had the satisfaction to receive the humorous accot.⁵⁷ you were pleased to give me of your nocturnal journey to Fredericksburg. I recollect very well, the Lady whom you mention to have had for a fellow traveller, and if you should chance to be in her company again, I should be much obliged by your presenting my compliments to her. The even tenor of my life (in which I can expect to meet with few extraordinary adventures) as well as my long seclusion in a great measure, from the exhilarating scenes of mixed society, must be an apology for my not attempting (with such provocatives to gaiety) to say some more sprightly things in reply to the brilliancy of her dialogue; or the vivacity with which you have reported it. I commend you, however, for passing the time in as merry a manner as you possibly could; it is assuredly better to go laughing than crying thro' the rough journey of life.

I have mentioned your request to Colo. Humphreys, who is still at Mr. Vernon and who has put a copy of his last poem into my hands to be forwarded with his compliments to you. He has farther desired me to inform you, in answer to the civil things you have said of it, that he feels himself singularly happy whenever he finds that his works are honored with the approbation of men of taste and liberality. He regrets that he cannot send you the copy of a former poem, which after being several times reprinted in Europe, has lately been translated

57. Bland's "humorous" account is not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

by the Marqs. de Chastelleux, and received with a great deal of applause at Paris.

I shall always be happy to give and receive communications on improvements in farming, and the various branches of agriculture. This is in my opinion, an object of infinite importance to the country; I consider it to be the proper source of American wealth and happiness. Whose streams might become more copious and diffusive, if gentlemen of leisure and capacity would turn their attention to it, and bring the result of their experiments together? Nothing but cultivation is wanting. Our lot has certainly destined a good country

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for our inheritance. We begin already to attract the notice of foreigners of distinction. A French general officer whose name is Du Plessis is now at Mount Vernon on his way to Georgia, with a design to settle there as a farmer.

Sequestered as I am, from the bustlings and intrigues of the world, in the calm walks of private life; I can hardly flatter myself with being able to give much light or assistance, to those who may be engag'd in passing thro' the dark and thorny paths of politics. I can only repeat what I have formerly told my countrymen in a very serious manner "that honesty will be found, on every experiment, the best policy". How far arguments deduced from this *topic*, and from the *present alarming* troubles in Rhode Island, can with pertinancy and force be made use of against any attempts to procure a paper currency in the State, I leave to your judgment to decide. The advantages which are to be derived from Seminaries of learning, from the improvement of our roads, a proper establishment of our Militia, the extension of inland navigation &c. must have struck

you in too forcible a manner to need a remembrancer.

My sentiments respecting foederal measures, in general, are so well known that it is unnecessary to reiterate them. The two Mrs. Washingtons and my nephew join in compliments with me to Mrs. Bland and yourself, and I am, etc.⁵⁸

To MARQUIS DE CHASTELLUX

Mount Vernon, August 18, 1786.

My Dr. Marquis: I cannot omit to seize the earliest occasion, to acknowledge the receipt of the very affectionate letter you did me the honor of writing to me on the 22d. of May; as well as to thank you for the *present* of your Travels in America and the translation of Colo. Humphreys's Poem, all of which came safe to hand by the same conveyance.

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Knowing, as I did, the candour, liberality and philanthropy of the Marquis de Chastellux, I was prepared to disbelieve any imputations that might militate agst. these amiable qualities. For characters and habits are not easily taken up, or suddenly laid aside. Nor does that mild species of philosophy which aims at promoting human happiness, ever belye itself by deviating from the generous and godlike pursuit. Having notwithstanding understood that some misrepresentations of the work in question, had been circulated; I was happy to learn that you had

58. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

taken the most effectual method to put a stop to their circulation, by publishing a more ample and correct edition. Colo. Humphreys (who has been some weeks at Mount Vernon) confirm'd me in the sentiment by giving a most flattering account of the whole performance: he has also put into my hands the translation of that part in which you say such, and so many handsome things of me; that (altho' no sceptic on ordinary occasions) I may perhaps be allowed to doubt whether your friendship and partiality have not, in this one instance, acquired an ascendancy over your cooler judgment.

Having been thus unwarily, and I may be permitted to add, almost unavoidably betrayed into a kind of necessity to speak of myself, and not wishing to resume that subject, I choose to close it forever by observing, that as, on the one hand, I consider it an indubitable mark of mean-spiritedness and pitiful vanity to court applause from the pen or tongue of man; so on the other, I believe it to be a proof of false modesty or an unworthy affectation of humility to appear altogether insensible to the *commendations* of the virtuous and enlightened part of our species. Perhaps nothing can excite more perfect harmony in the soul than to have this string vibrate in unison with the internal consciousness of rectitude in our intentions and an humble hope of approbation from the supreme disposer of all things.

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I have communicated to Colonel Humphreys that paragraph in your letter wch. announces the very favorable reception his Poem has met with in France. Upon the principles I have just laid down, he cannot be indifferent to the applauses of so enlightened a nation, nor to the suffrages of the King and Queen who have been pleased to honor it with their royal approbation.

We have no news on this side

the Atlantic worth the pains of sending across it. The country is recovering rapidly from the ravages of the war: the seeds of population are scattered far in the Wilderness: agriculture is prosecuted with industry: the works of Peace, such as opening rivers, building bridges &c., are carried on with spirit. Trade is not so successful as we could wish, our State Governments are well administered. Some objects in our fœderal system might probably be altered for the better. I rely much on the good sense of my countrymen, and trust that a superintending Providence will disappoint the hopes of our Enemies. With sentiments of the sincerest esteem etc.⁶⁰

60. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On August 18 Washington wrote also to Clement Biddle, sending two window curtains "which I pray you to get new dyed of the same color, *green*, and returned to me as soon as may be.... The price of Mr. Howell's leather is not cheaper than it is sold in Alexandria, and the freight would make it come higher." A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

To METCALF BOWLER⁶¹

Mount Vernon, August 19, 1786.

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Sir: I have received your letter of the 21st. of July together with the Treatise on Agriculture and practical Husbandry. I consider the latter as a mark of attention which merits my warmest acknowledgments.

It is a subject highly worth the attention of every gentleman in this country who has leisure, abilities, or opportunity to improve it. It is the only source from which we can at present draw any real or permanent advantage; and in my opinion it must be a great (if not the sole) means of our attaining to that degree of respectability and importance which we ought to hold ill the world. I am, etc.⁶⁰

To THOMAS NEWTON, JUNIOR

Mount Vernon, August 19, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Inclosed is a duplicate of my letter to you of the 26th. of May which was forwarded by Peter Virwins who received fifty barrels of superfine Flour to be deliver'd to you at Norfolk. It is now almost three months since the flour was sent: as I have not heard from you, and

60. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On August 18 Washington wrote also to Clement Biddle, sending two window curtains "which I pray you to get new dyed of the same color, *green*, and returned to me as soon as may be.... The price of Mr. Howell's leather is not cheaper than it is sold in Alexandria, and the freight would make it come higher." A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

61. Of Newport R. I.

am unacquainted with Mr. Virwin, I do not know whether it has come to your hands or not. If you have received it, and it is sold, I should be glad to know what it sold for; if it is not

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sold, should wish to know what it will sell for, as, from the short crops of wheat, I think it must now fetch a pretty good price. I am, etc.⁶²

To THOMAS HUTCHINS

Mount Vernon, August 20, 1786.

Sir: You will see by the enclosed letter from the Marqs. de la Fayette to me, that the Empress of Russia is desirous of obtaining some authentic documents respecting the languages of the natives of this Country, for the purpose of compiling an universal Dictionary. As I have thought no person was more in condition to accomplish that essential service for the republic of letters than yourself, I have taken the liberty of transmitting a specimen of the vocabulary to you, together with a request that you do me the favor of paying as early and accurate attention to the completion of the matter, as your avocations will admit. Persuaded that a gentleman of your taste for science in general, and particularly of your capacity for acquiring the information in question, will enter upon the task with pleasure, I make no apology for troubling you with it. Nor do I think it necessary to add any

62. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

thing farther, than that it may be expedient to extend the vocabulary as far as, with the aid of your friends, you conveniently can; and that the greatest possible precision and exactitude will be indispensable in committing the Indian words to paper, by a just orthography.

With sentiments of esteem etc.⁶³

To THE SECRETARY AT WAR

Mount Vernon, August 21, 1786.

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Dr. Sir: The inclosed letter I received a short time since. As I am wholly unacquainted with the writer, and circumstances therein mentioned, I can only say, that if the facts are such as there alledged, I think the sufferer is entitled to some redress; but how far it may be in the power of Congress to comply with petitions of this nature I am not able to say. You undoubtedly know much better than I do, and I am sure your exertions will never be wanting to have justice done to those who have suffered by adhering to the cause of our Country. I am, etc.⁶⁴

63. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*. A duplicate of this letter, addressed to Col. George Morgan, near Princeton, N. J, was (1907) stated to be in the possession of A. S. Morgan, of Pittsburgh, Pa.

64. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On August 22 Washington wrote briefly to Maurice Desdevens, a former captain of Canadian militia in Montgomery's expedition against Quebec, that he had forwarded his letter to Knox. A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

To JONATHAN LORING AUSTIN

Mount Vernon, August 23, 1786.

Sir: I have received your Oration of the 4th. of July, which you did me the honor to send me; and am much obliged to you for so polite a mark of attention. I have perused it with a great deal of pleasure, and hope that the anniversary of that day will ever be commemorated in this country as the era from which we may date our happiness and importance. I am, etc.⁶⁴

To REVEREND JOHN WITHERSPOON

Mount Vernon, August 23, 1786.

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Revd. Sir: The last Post brought me your favor of the 14th. You have been misinformed respecting the congregation of Pohick. It is of the Episcopal Church and at this time has an incumbent; of

64. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On August 22 Washington wrote briefly to Maurice Desdevens, a former captain of Canadian militia in Montgomery's expedition against Quebec, that he had forwarded his letter to Knox. A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

which I give you the earliest notice for the information of Mr. Wilson.⁶⁵

A Church above this, formerly under the same Ministry, is, I believe, unprovided; but of what Religion the people thereabout *now* are, I am unable to say. Most probably a medley as they have had Methodist, and Baptist preachers of all kinds among them. With respect, I am, etc.⁶⁶

To JAMES HILL

Mount Vernon, August 29, 1786.

Sir: I have been in continual expectation ever since my return to private life (now near three years) of receiving a statement of the accots. between us. This not having yet happened, and finding sums which I expected were due to me (especially in the case of Mr. Newton of Norfolk from whom I thought a large balance was due to me) charged as having been paid to you, it makes it indispensably necessary for me to be furnished with a precise and compleat accot. of all the transactions of my business which had been committed to your care from the date of the last settlement which I made with you myself, to the present moment. Shewing, if monies have been paid to others or myself, the sums, and by what authority it was done. Without these it is impossible for me to adjust my own

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accounts, or bring my business to a close with others. I pray you therefore not to delay complying with this request, and it will oblige Yrs., etc.

65. James Wilson, a Scotch Presbyterian minister.

66. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

P.S. That this letter may be certain of getting to your hands, I have requested Mr. Henley to send it by a special messenger. Your answer will come safe, and more expeditiously by the Post, than by a private conveyance, and is the mode I would prefer receiving it.⁶⁷

To DIEGO DE GARDOQUI

Mount Vernon, August 30, 1786.

Sir: The day before yesterday gave me the honor of your Excellency's favor, written on the 12th. of June, with a postscript thereto of the 22d. of July. It was accompanied by the cloth made of the wool of the Vicuna, which indeed is of a softness and richness which I have never seen before, and is truly worthy of being called his Majesty's *true* manufactured cloth.

For your Excellency's goodness in presenting me with this specimen of it, I pray you to accept my best acknowledgements. I receive it Sir, as a mark of your polite attention to me, and shall wear it with much pleasure as a memento thereof. The color is really beautiful, and being natural can never fade.

I feel myself much indebted to your Excellency. for communicating the testimonies of my gratitude to the King, thro' the medium of His Excellency. Count de Florida Blanca, for his royal present of the Jack Asses; one of which arrived very safe, and promises to be a most valuable animal. I am endeavouring to provide a female, that the advantages which are to be derived from this Jack may not end with *his* life.

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67. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

I can omit no occasion of assuring your Excellency of the high sense I entertain of the many marks of polite attention I have received from you; nor of the pleasure I should feel in the honor of expressing it at this seat of my retirement from public life, if you should ever feel an inclination to make an excursion into the middle States. I have the honor, etc.⁶⁷

To DAVID HUMPHREYS

Mount Vernon, September 1, 1786.

My dear Humphreys: Enclosed are all the documents Mr. Lear could find respecting the confinement, and treatment under it, of Captain Asgill. For want of recurrence to them before I wrote to Mr. Tilghman,² I perceive that a bad memory had run me into an error in my narrative of the latter, in one particular. For it should seem by that, as if the loose and unguarded manner in which Capt'n Asgill was held, was sanctioned by me; whereas one of my letters to Colo. Dayton condemns this conduct, and orders Asgill to be closely confined. Mr. Lear has given all the letters at length. Extracts might have answered. But I judged it better that the whole tenor of the Correspondence should appear, that no part might seem to be hidden.

I well remember Major Gordon's attending Asgill; and by one of my letters to Dayton it is evident that Gordon had written to me; but my letters-books have registered no reply.

67. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

2. See Washington's letter to James Tilghman, June 5, 1786, *ante*.

In what manner it would be best to bring this matter before the Publik eye I am at a loss, and leave it to you to determine under a consideration of the circumstances which are as fully communicated as the documents in my hands will enable me to do. There is one

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mystery in the business which I cannot develop, nor is there any papers in my possession which explain it. Hazen was ordered to send an unconditional prisoner. Asgill comes. Hazen or some other must have given information of a Lieutenant Turner, (under the former description). Turner is ordered on, but never came. Why? I am unable to say; nor is there any letter from Hazen (to be found) that accounts for a noncompliance with this order. If I had not too many causes to distrust my memory I should ascribe it to there having been no such Officer, or that he was also under capitulation, for Capt. Shaack seems to have been held as a proper victim after this.

I will write as soon as I am able to Mr. Tilghman, requesting him to withhold my first acct of Asgill's treatment, from his correspondent in England, promising an authentic one from original papers. It may however have passed him, in that case, it will be necessary for me to say something to reconcile my own Accts.

I write to you with a very aching head, and disordered frame, and Mr. Lear will copy the letter. Saturday last, by an imprudent act, I brought on an ague and fever on Sunday, which returned with violence Tuesday and Thursday; and if Doctor Craik's efforts are ineffec

tual, I shall have them again this day. The family join me in every good wish for you. It is unnecessary to assure you of the friendship and affection with which I am &c.

P.S. We have found Gordon's letters. They contain [a remonstrance and de]mand of Asgill as an officer protected by the Capitulation of York-Town. This I suppose is the reason they were never answered.³

[N.Y.P.L.]

3. In the writing of Tobias Lear. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

To GEORGE GILPIN AND JOHN FITZGERALD

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Mount Vernon, September 1, 1786.

Gent: Nothing but sickness would have prevented my attending at the Seneca Falls on Monday next agreeably to appointment. On Sunday last (occasioned by an imprudent act) I was seized by an ague and fever. Whether the Doctors efforts will baffle them tomorrow, remains to be determined; but at any rate he thinks it would be improper for me to leave home. The fevers moreover, have made such havock of my mouth, nose and chin that I am unable to put a razor to my face. Thus circumstanced, I have given up all idea of meeting the Board the 4th. instant.

Besides the business which is the immediate occasion of this meeting, it might be well, as we are every day thrown back in our operations on the bed of the River, to prepare the draft of a Petition which will be necessary to hand to the respective Assemblies for prolongation of the time for that part of the undertaking; and, as there may be difficulties in the way yet unforeseen, I should incline to enlarge it to the greatest extent it is thought we can obtain. I submit for consideration also, the propriety (if the waters should get low enough in the course of the Fall) of a thorough investigation of the River, by a skilful person, from the Shannondoah falls to Fort Cumberland at least; that by having the matter fully before us, we may be enabled to form some

precise judgment of the difficulties which lie in the way, and prepare for them accordingly.

As I cannot do greater justice to the sentiments of the Company respecting its approbation of the conduct of the Directors, than is conveyed by the address of the Committee, I have the honor of forwarding a copy of that letter to me, which I beg the favor of you, Gentn. to lay before the Board at the Meeting which is about to take place. With great esteem and regard, I am, etc.¹

To JAMES TILGHMAN

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Mount Vernon, September 2, 1786.

Dr. Sir: If the Account I handed to you respecting the treatment of Captn. Asgill (in confinement) has not passed from you, I should be obliged to you for withholding, and suffering no copies to be taken from it; to counteract such an injurious and ill founded calumny which obtains credit as it rolls on.

I have it in contemplation to inspect my registers, and to give something from authentic documents relative to this matter. The former being drawn up in a hasty manner, and from memory, may contain something inconsistent with the latter, which will be substantiated. With great esteem etc.⁴

1. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On September 1 Washington wrote to William Hartshorne, sending him the address from a committee of the Potomac company, which "will convey the sense of that Company on the fidelity and accuracy with which your accots. have been kept, in the fullest and clearest manner. I have great pleasure in communicating these sentiments, and with very great esteem and regard, I am etc." A copy of this is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

4. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN FRANCIS MERCER

Mount Vernon, September 9, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Your favor of the 20th ulto. did not get to my hands 'till about the first of this month. It found me in a fever from which I am now but sufficiently recovered to attend to business. I mention this as the reason why your propositions have not been attended to before.

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With respect to the first, I never mean (unless some particular circumstance should compel me to it) to possess another slave by purchase; it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted, by which slavery in this country may be abolished by slow, sure, and imperceptible degrees. With respect to the second, I never did, nor never intend to purchase a military certificate. I see no difference it makes with you, (if it is one of the funds allotted for the discharge of my claim) who the purchaser is. If the depreciation between them and specie is three for one; you will have it in your power whilst at the receipt of Custom, Richmond, where it is said the great regulator of this business (Graves) resides, to convert them into specie at that rate. If the difference is more, there would be no propriety (if I inclined to deal in them at all) in my taking them at that exchange.

I shall rely upon your promise of £200 in five weeks from the date of your letter. It will enable me to pay the workmen which have been employed about this House all the Spring and Summer (some of whom are yet here): but there are two debts which press hard upon me, one of which,

if there is no other method left, I must sell Land or Negroes to discharge. It is owing to the Govr. of New York, Clinton, who was so obliging as to borrow the sum of £2000 to answer some calls of mine; to be paid in 12 months after the conclusion of Peace.

For this sum he became my security, and for what remains due (about £800 York Curry.) I am now paying an interest of 7 pr. Ct. but the high interest, tho' more than any estate can bear, I should not regard if my credit was not at stake to comply with the conditions of the loan. The other debt, tho' I am anxious to discharge it, and the person to whom I owe it, I know wants it, yet it might I believe, be put off a while longer; this sum is larger than the other. I am, &c.10

To SAMUEL VAUGHAN

Mount Vernon, September 12, 1786.

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Dr. Sir: A few days ago I had the honor to receive your favor of the 22d. ulto.

At the same time that I regret not having had the pleasure of testifying under my own roof the respect and regard I had imbibed for your Lady and family before their departure from this Continent, I beg you to be assured that every wish which I can offer for a short and agreeable passage, and happy meetings with their friends in England, attends them. Although I can now no longer look for the pleasure of the Ladies

10. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

companies at this seat of my retirement, I will not despair of seeing you at it, when it can be made to comport with your other pursuits. It is unnecessary I persuade myself to repeat the assurances of the pleasure it would give me you, or such of your family as remain in this country, here, or of the sincere esteem and respect with which I have the honor, etc.11

To CHARLES SIMMS

Virginia, September 22, 1786.

Dear Sir: I now sit down to avail myself of your friendly offer of serving me, whilst you are on your Western tour.

I give you the trouble of some letters: that to Mr. Smith I leave open for your perusal, please to seal before delivering it. Mr. Smith has my Patent. Posey's Bond on which my military right was founded, and on which the warrt. for surveying issued, together with every other public and private document which could be obtained in evidence of the regularity and legality of my claim. The plea of the Defendants will be, I know, that I cannot trace any steps of regular and authentic proceedings, back to their occupancy. For say they, you can find no entry in the Surveyor's books, nor on the records of Council, previous

11. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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to the Survey; which is the first legal process you can adduce, and this is not dated 'till Feby. when our settlement of the Land was in the month of Octr. preceeding, nay more, your warrant of Survey, which was laid upon this Land, received date in Novr. subsequent by a month to our settlement. The latter (under the rose) I believe is fact, and is as unaccountable, as it may be unlucky, as my purchase from Posey (for the express purpose of covering this tract) was made, as will appear by the Bond, if my memory has not deceived me, in the year 1770; this difference, if it is not founded in mistake, is altogether incomprehensible, as the land was explored and surveyed for me the first time in the fall of 1770, or early in the following year; and this right, as I have before observed, was intended as the legal security of it.

The first and second surveys, or in other words, the legal return of the first differing in dates, were both made by Captn. (afterwards Colonel) Crawford. The first was made whilst his commission was local; given for the express purpose of surveying 200,000 acres granted by Mr. Dinwiddie's Proclamation, to the officers and soldiers of the *first* Virginia Regiment. The second, or, as I have before mentioned, the return, was made after he had received a deputation under Mr. Thos. Lewis for Augusta, in which County the land was supposed to lie, and this I believe did not happen 'till Feby. 1774; consequently the date was made subsequent to the date of the deputation.

Upon these grounds, my *legal title* I am convinced will be disputed, with a view to establish *their occupancy*; but there is an act (an authentic copy of which I have sent Mr. Smith) which legalizes the

surveys of Crawford from the period he first held a commission from the College.¹² But for Arguments sake, supposing my Patent, and every thing which led to the attainment of it, were mere nullities, and my military claim out of the question, had I not an equal right with any other Citizen or subject, to obtain land in that Country? It cannot be laid to my charge that I have been either a monopolizer, or land-jobber, for I never sold a foot of Land in the Country, nor am I possessed of an acre west of the Alleghaney (and

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the quantity comparatively speaking is small) that I do not hold under military rights; except the tract at what is called Washington's bottom, and about 2 or 300 acres at the Gt. Meadows, both of which I purchased: the latter at a high price. And that I surveyed this land before the defendants ever saw it; built one or more Cabins thereon before they came into the Country; hired people to live on it; gave them repeated notices of my right afterwards of the consequences of their usurpation, are facts. But whether evidence can *now* be obtained in support of all of them, is questionable; as the two Crawford's who were my principal Agents in that Country are both dead, others knowing to the transactions, removed, and a third sett unwilling, I have no doubt to come forward. Yet under all these disadvantages, Charles Morgan will be able, or I am mistaken, to prove that the survey was made a year or two before the Defendants

12. William and Mary College.

pretend any claim to occupancy (the date of which requires better proof than their own assertion). And I think he is the most likely person to prove also that there were cabbins erected thereon for my benefit, claims antecedent to those of the Defendts. purchased by Crawford on my accot. to avoid disputes, a man hired to live on the land to keep others off it, and that frequent notices were given to them of the lands being mine, and admonishing them to quit it.

Marcus Stephenson must be knowing to many if not all of these circumstances, but a spell of sickness, I have been told, has impaired his memory, and may have rendered him an unfit evidence. Major Lite¹³ and George McCormick, or the brother who married Colo. Crawford's daughter, cannot, I shou'd think, be unacquainted with many of these facts. There can be no question of Colo. Cannon's¹⁴ testifying to what I have recited in my letter to Mr. Smith, because I had the information from his own mouth and he is a Gentn. of credit. I should think it strange indeed, if Colo. Jno. Stephenson from his connexion and intimacy with Colo. Crawford is not privy to most of these things. Possibly Mrs. Crawford

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may be as strong an evidence to some points as any one. Captn. Swearingin¹⁵ also seemed to have knowledge of them.

The reason of my being so particular with you, my good Sir, is, that if any of these people should fall in your way, and upon enquiry it shall be found that they possess the knowledge I conceive of these transactions, but are unwilling to come forward, that effectual steps may be taken to compel them. There is reason to apprehend that an oath *only* will extort from *some of them* all they do know. Colo. Cannon,

13. Jacob Hite(?).

14. Col. John Cannon.

15. Van Swearingen.

Chas. Morgan, Marcus Stephenson (if he has recollection enough), and perhaps Majr. Lite, must be more intimately acquainted with Colo. Crawford's proceedings on my behalf in the early stages of this business, than any others. Morgan or Lite surveyed the Land; M: Stephenson carried the chain, and, I believe made the improvements. What G: McCormick and Captn. Swearingin can say in the case, I know not, both I believe would willingly serve me, and would point out if they are acquainted with them, the evidences that may be essential on the tryal if it shall be found necessary for me to attack on this ground.

The enclosure No. 2 contains some queries which were put to Mr. Smith, but not answered, tho' touched upon by him as appears by his letter No. 3 I will thank you for doing what shall seem necessary in this business. There is an open Accot. between Vale. Crawford and me, by which it appears that he is about £100, in my debt. Conscious of this, and of my engagements for him, unsolicited, he wrote me the letter and sent me the Bill of sale referred to in my letter to Mr. Smith of the 8th. of May last, and now in his trust.

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My Lands in Pennsylvania (west of the Laurel-hill) have been so unproductive of every thing but vexation and trouble, that I am resolved to sell them at long or short credit, as may best suit the purchaser, provided I can get near the value of them. The tract where the Mill is, lying in Fayette County, and commonly called Washington's bottom, contains about 1650 acres. The one in

dispute, lying in Washington County, contains about 2,800 acres. The defendants were a long time deliberating on eligibility of giving me 25/pt. acre, rather than to engage in a Law suit; but finally chose the latter: they must give more now if I cost [*sic*] them. Should you hear of any purchasers, or if you could discover the price it is probable to obtain from them, you would render me a service by the communication. Inclosed are several advertisements, 16 one of which I pray you to have set up at the Court houses of the County in which the Lands lie, at Pittsburgh, and at such other places as you may think best.

I give you the trouble of proving (I believe before a Magistrate) the power of Attorney which I have executed before you, and to send it with my letter inclosed to Major Thomas Freeman who does business for me in that County.

I paid Mr. Smith, at the time the Ejectments were brought, some where about £20 If you could by indirect or other means, discover what would be proper compensation for his trouble in this business, I should be much obliged by it. I have had in the course of my life, so little to do with Law and Lawyers, that I feel myself extreamly awkward in these matters.

With sentiments of great esteem, etc.17

ADVERTISEMENT

Virginia, September 22, 1786.

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The Subscriber would sell his land in Fayette County, State of Pennsylvania, containing about 1650 acres, distinguished, commonly,

16. See Advertisement, Sept. 22, 1786, *post*.

17. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

by the name of Washington's Bottom

Also,

About 2800 acres on Miller's-run, a branch of Shirtee, in Washington Coty. and State aforesaid, if the Ejectments now depending are decided in his favor.

The credits may be long or short according to the price given. To describe these Lands is needless, as the presumption, and wish of the proprietor is, that those who incline to purchase, would examine them well.

Majr. Thos. Freeman will shew the land in Fayette County; and Majr. Geo: McCormick the other tract.

To THOMAS SMITH

Mount Vernon, September 22, 1786.

Sir: the letter which you did me the favor of writing to me from Philada. the 9th. ulto. came duly to hand.

A fever, of which I am but just well recovered, makes me fearful of encountering the bad roads and disagreeable accommodations between this and the Western Country at this season: other circumstances too, rendering it inconvenient for me to be from home at this time, have combined to set aside the journey I had it in contemplation to make to the Court

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of Nisi prius to be holden in Washington county State of Pennsylvania, on the 23d. of next month. Nor, upon a revision of the

notes with which I have furnished you, do I see wherein I could add aught to them, were I to be present at the trial. The summoning of a Jury so long before the merits of the cause will come *legally* before it, is, in my opinion, very much against me; for there can be no doubt but that every indirect (if not direct) means, which the Defendants and their friends can adopt, will be used to impress the members who constitute it, with all the circumstances favourable to their claim. However, if it is an event to be regretted, it is equally unavoidable, as it is constitutional.

There were Proclamations (as I have observed on a former occasion) and orders of Council in this State previous to the Revolution, which, could they have been adduced, might have subserved my cause, in as much as it would have appeared from them, that tho' military rights were recognized, and warrants of Survey were actually issued by the Executive previous, to the occupancy of the Defendants; yet, that their settlement of the Lands which were considered as appertaining to the State of Virga. was expressly contrary to a pointed Proclamation, consequently must not only have been illegal, but highly unwarrantable, as it was an invasion of private right (for the Defendants do not deny having been informed that the land was surveyed for me) as well as a contempt of public authority; however, the records of these proceedings are lost, as you will find by the authenticated Certificate, which has been heretofore sent you.

My opinion of the case, as I have mentioned in a former letter, is, that the legal title ought to be insisted upon strenuously; and that the Deed, as it was the last

solemn act of the Government, shou'd be considered as conclusive evidence of the regularity of the antecedent proceedings; it being a fact well known in this Country, that by the removal of the Records from Williamsburgh whilst the enemy were manoeuvring in the State, many of them were lost or destroyed. To argue otherwise, is to arraign the

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conduct of the Government in the management of its own internal policy; and I do not know under, or by what authority the State of Pennsylvania can *now*, after having made a solemn compact with this State, by which she engages to confirm all legal established titles, go into such an enquiry. But if, notwithstanding, from the complexion of matters it should be conceived that the plea of pre-occupancy is likely to have weight; I would *then* as if to shew that *even on that ground* the defendants stand hindmost, call evidence to prove that the land was surveyed for me before they came into the Country; that a cabin if no more (for one remain'd there in 1784) was built on the land before they ever saw it; that Colo. Cannon had fixed himself thereon before them; but discovering traces of a regular Survey, and upon enquiry finding it was made for me, quit it after having done some work thereon; that the Defendants were also told that the land belonged to me, whilst they were in the act of settling upon it, and were repeatedly informed of it afterwards, and admonished by public notices and private intimations of the hazard they run, as I was determined (as soon as my

public duty would allow me to attend to private concerns) to assert my right to the land. These all are indubitable facts; but where the evidences are, or by what means they can be drawn forward to prove them, are questions which I am not able to solve; unless Colo. Crawford's letters will be admitted, and those persons whom I have named in the notes formerly sent you, will make them appear.

As I have confided this cause entirely to your management, I should, if Mr. Ross's abilities had not spoke so powerfully in his favour, have been perfectly well pleased at your choice of him as a coadjutor. With talents such as you describe, I cannot but be highly satisfied therewith.

My friend Colo. Simms, who will do me the favor of presenting this letter to you, is called to the Western Courts in your State on some business of his own. He perfectly understands the Laws of this State, the practices of our Courts, and the principles of our Land Office, and may be able to communicate much useful information. You may place

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entire confidence in him, safely trusting him with all the communications I have to you and with a sight of the papers if he should incline to see them.

I am much obliged to you for the information respecting the Bill of Sale from Vale. Crawford. At the time of my writing to you on this business, I was quite ignorant of the agency you had in the matter, on behalf of another, the declaration of which will, I hope, be an apology for my application to you in a case where you were Counsel for another. I have requested the favor of Colo. Simm to do, or cause to be done what shall appear

just and proper in this case. To secure my debt is all the inducement I have for resorting to the Bill of Sale.

I ought my good Sir, to have recollected the trouble you have had in this business 'ere this, and I intended to have compensated it out of the funds I had in that country, but in truth they have been very unproductive, but if you will be so obliging as to inform me by Colo. Simm with what sum can equal your expectations, I will resort to other means to lodge it in Philadelphia for you. With very great esteem, etc.¹⁸

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, September 23, 1786.

Dr. Sir: It is sometime since my window curtains were sent to you to get dyed; I should be glad to have them back as soon as an opportunity offers of forwarding them to me. Let me beg you to send by Mr. Porter,¹⁹ (who will deliver you this letter) if he can bring it, or with the curtains if he cannot, 16 yards of Stuff of the same kind and colour of the curtains, to cover two dozen chairs, the front of which will require cloth near 2½ feet wide, and the hinder part near two

18. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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19. Of Alexandria, Va.

feet; this I fear is wider than that kind of Stuff generally is, but it is to be hoped that the gores which come off the latter, will be sufficient for the former.

Do the prices of the articles mention'd in my former letter still keep up? I pray you to cause the enclosed Advertisement to be published three weeks in one of your Gazette's which has the most general circulation. With great esteem, I am, etc.²⁰

To WILLIAM TRIPLET

Mount Vernon, September 25, 1786.

Sir: If Mr. Lund Washington has not misconceived the conversation which passed between you and me the day you lay ill in bed; or if you understood the matter in the same light he seems to have done, I find there is another mistake between us respecting Mrs. French's²¹ land, which it behooves me to clear up as soon as possible.

He thinks you asked me if I meant to take the land for the term of Robinson's²² lease; and that I answered yes. If such a question and such an answer passed, we must some how or other have been at cross purposes; for clear and evident it must be, even to yourself, that I could have no intention of being concerned with the land at all, unless it was for Mrs. French's life. You may well recollect Sir,

20. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

21. Mrs. Penelope French.

22. John Robertson (Robinson). His agreement with Washington, dated Oct. 24, 1786, is in the *Washington Papers*.

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that I declared this in explicit terms in the conversation I had with you at my own house, and assigned reasons for it to you, namely, that if I got this and Mr. Manley's Land it was my intention to blend them and my other plantations together, and to form entire new ones out of the whole; that I meant to go into an entire new course of cropping, and would lay off my fields accordingly in a permanent and lasting form by Ditches and Hedges; and that it was for this reason I was desirous of knowing this fall (before I went into such arrangement and expence) whether I had any chance of getting these places or not, because it might be too late afterwards to make any change in my plan. With this object in view, I must have been insane to have taken the plantation for the remainder of Robinson's lease only; first, because it is uncertain whether I could get possession of the Land or not, never having exchanged a word with Robinson on the subject, nor never intending to do it unless I had got the place to myself entirely; and, secondly, if I did, because I should not probably be able to compleat the plan of enclosures by the time the Lease would expire. What situation should I be in then? A new bargain under every disadvantage to make, or go back to my former grounds? In the latter case all my labour and expence would have been thrown away and my whole plan defeated. In the former (that is supposing Robinson could not be got off by fair means, and Mr. Lee is of opinion, which opinion I had in my pocket at the time I call'd

upon you in expectation of meeting Mrs. French that without a regular demand of rent and reentry, which might be a tedious and expensive process in Courts, the Lease cannot be set aside) under these circumstances I say, I should have made myself liable for the payment of Robinson's rent, without deriving a single advantage. Will any body think this reasonable; or suppose that whilst I retain my senses, I would do it?

As I do not recollect that in the course of my life I ever forfeited my word, or broke a promise made to any one, I have been thus particular to evince (if you understand the matter in the same light that Lund Washington did) that I was not attending to or did not understand the question.

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I am sorry any mistake has happened and to convince you and Mrs. French that through the whole of this business, I meant to act upon fair, open and honorable grounds, I will, as mistakes have taken place, and as there is a difference of opinion respecting the annual value of the Lands and negroes,²³ leave it to any person of her own choosing (Major Little if she pleases) to say, whether the rent after the expiration of Robinson's lease shall be £136, or £150 pt. ann: if he thinks one too much and the other too little, any sum between. Mrs. French has declared that she neither wanted, nor would take more than the intrinsic worth of the place. I on the word of a man of honor declare that I do not desire it for a farthing less than the value; for to make money by it was never my object; but we differ in our sentiments of this. Is there any mode then so fair, as for an impartial person to see the place, and to hear what Mrs. French, or you in her behalf and myself will say on the subject, and then to decide according to this judgment from

23. An undated press copy of "A list of Negros the property of Mrs. French, in possession of George Washington, by virtue of a Contract which terminates with the life of the former" is in the New York Public Library. It was drawn up by Washington, presumably, during the negotiations.

the facts? and can there be any thing more favourable to her wishes than to have this determined by her friend in whom she places, I presume, implicit confidence? I never exchanged a word directly nor indirectly with Majr. Little on the subject, but believing him to be a gentleman who will decide according to the dictates of his judgment, I am not afraid to entrust the matter to him, notwithstanding the family connexion between him and Mrs. French. In a word, I am so conscious of the rectitude of my intentions in the whole of this business, that it is a matter of the most perfect indifference to me, to whom it is left; and tho' it may be supposed I have some sinister views in saying it, yet without the gift of prophecy, I will venture to pronounce, that if Mrs. French misses me as a Tenant, she will repent, long before Robinson's Lease expires, for having done so: for I can assure her from an experience of more than twenty five years that there is a very wide difference

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between getting Tenants and getting rents. She may get a dozen of the first (and I have not the smallest doubt but she may); but if there is one among them who (having no other dependence than the produce of the Plantation) will pay her the latter without hard working and pinching her negroes, and a great deal of trouble and vexation to her, I shall be more mistaken than I ever was in any thing of the kind in my life.

This may not appear so to her at first view; because it is but too common to compare things without attending

enough to the circumstances of them.

I have no doubt but that Mrs. French thinks it very strange that I should receive £120 a year rent from Mr. Dulaney, and scruple to give her £150 for rather more land, and twenty odd negroes; but has she considered that the one is accompanied by no charge except the land tax, and the other with many and heavy ones? And do not every body who have meadows, and have ever made an estimate of their value, know that an acre of tolerable good grass will pay all the expences of cutting, curing and stacking, and will put at least 40/ in the owner's pocket annually? What then has Mr. Dulaney to do more than to keep up his fences to pay the rent? By his Advertisement of pasturage for Horses at 3/ pr. week he has acres. Suppose it only the meadow alone without a single hand will yield him at least pr. ann: Is there a single acre of land on Mrs. French's plantation from which, (besides cropping, so precarious) this is to be expected? Is there a single acre which can be converted into meadow? Is not the Land much worn, greatly exhausted and gullied in many places? None can deny it. But why need I enumerate or dwell on these things? Have I not put the matter upon as fair a footing as a man possibly can do? If Mrs. French wants no more than the value, as she has declared, what objection can she have to Majr. Little's saying what that value is? If this proposition is acceded to the sooner it is communicated to me the better. I have never yet opened my mouth to Robinson on the subject of his Lease, nor never intended to do it unless I had got the Plantation for Mrs. French's life. When I

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sent the papers to Mr. Lee to draw the writings, I asked his opinion of the lease, which he gave, to the effect already mentioned.

It was for my private satisfaction I asked it, for as I told you before and now repeat, I never had an intention to get him off otherwise than by fair means, this year or any other. This year will convince him or I am mistaken, that his inevitable ruin (if he has any thing to loose) will follow his holding it another year, if it is not the case already. I am, &c.²⁴

To WILLIAM JACKSON

Mount Vernon, September 28, 1786.

Dr. Sir: I have received your letter of the 20th. ulto. together with the pamphlets enclosed. I consider your sending the latter to me as a mark of attention wch. deserves my warmest acknowledgments.

24. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

I cannot join with you in thinking that the partiality of your friends in assigning to you so honorable a task,²⁵ prejudiced their discernment. The subject is noble, the field extensive, and I think it must be highly satisfactory, and indeed flattering to a man that his performance upon such an occasion, is approved of by men of taste and judgment. I am, etc.²⁴

To BUSHROD WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, September 30, 1786.

Dear Bushrod: I was from home when your servant arrived, found him in a hurry to be gone when I returned; have company in the House, and am on the eve of a journey up the river to meet the Directors of the Potomac Company; these things combining, will not allow me time to give any explicit answer to the question you have propounded.²⁶

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Generally speaking, I have seen as much evil as good result from such Societies as you describe the Constitution of yours to be; they are a kind of imperium in imperio, and as often clog as facilitate public measures. I am no friend to institutions except in local matters which are wholly or in a great measure confined to the County of the Delegates. To me it appears much wiser and more politic, to choose able and honest representatives, and leave them in all national questions to determine from the evidence of reason, and the facts which shall be adduced, when internal and external information is given to them in a collective state.

25. Jackson's oration before the Pennsylvania Society of the Cincinnati on July 4, 1786.

24. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

26. Bushrod Washington's letter to Washington, stated by Sparks, to have been dated Sept. 27, 1786, is quoted by him as follows: "We have lately instituted a society in these lower counties, called the 'Patriotic Society.' As it is something new, and there are a few men both good and sensible who disapprove of it, it will be a high gratification to me to know your sentiments of it, if you will be so kind as to communicate them. The object of the institution is to inquire into the state of public affairs; to consider in what the true happiness of the people consists, and what are the evils which have pursued, and still continue to molest us; the means of attaining the former, and escaping the latter; to inquire into the conduct of those, who represent us, and to give them our sentiments upon those laws, which ought to be or are already made.

"It will also be a considerable object to instil principles of frugality into the minds of the people, both by precept and example. If any real good should result from such a society, we hope similar ones will be generally instituted through the State.; and, if so, they may establish a very formidable check upon evil-disposed men, who, clothed with power, make interested motives, and not public good, the rule of their conduct. These are the general outlines of the restitution; and, whether in the event it may be beneficial or not, I think

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that it has taken its rise in virtuous motives. We have had a considerable meeting of the most sensible and respectable gentlemen in this part of the country, and another is to be held on Tuesday next, previous to the meeting of the Assembly. Our design is to hold another as soon as the Assembly has risen; the first to instruct our delegates what they ought to do, the next to inquire what they have done." This letter is not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

What certainty is there that Societies in a corner or remote part of a State can possess that knowledge which is necessary for them to decide on many important questions which may come before an Assembly? What reason is there to expect, that the society itself may be accordant in opinion on such subjects? May not a few members of this society (more sagacious and designing than the rest) direct the measures of it to private views of their own? May not this embarrass an honest, able Delegate, who hears the voice of his Country from all quarters, and thwart public measures?

These are first thoughts, but I give no decided opinion. Societies nearly similar to such as you speak of, have lately been formed in Massachusetts: but what has been the consequence? Why they have declared the Senate useless; many other parts of the Constitution unnecessary; salaries of public officers burthensome &c. To point out the defects of the constitution (if any existed) in a decent way, was proper enough; but they have done more: they first vote the Court of Justice, in the present circumstances of the State, oppressive; and next, by violence stop them; which has occasioned a very solemn Proclamation and appeal from the Governor to the people. You may say no such matters are in contemplation by your Society: granted: a snow-ball gathers by rolling; possibly a line may be drawn between occasional meetings for special purposes, and a standing Society to direct with local views and partial information the affairs of the Nation, which cannot be well understood but by a large

and comparative view of circumstances. Where is this so likely to enter as in the general Assembly of the people? What figure then must a Delegate make who comes there with

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his hands tied, and his judgment forestalled? His very instructors, perhaps (if they had nothing sinister in view) were they present at all the information and arguments, which would come forward, might be the first to change sentiments.

Hurried as this letter is, I am sensible I am writing to you upon a very important subject. I have no time to copy, correct, or even peruse it; for which reason I could wish to have it or a copy returned to me.²⁷ George and his wife set off yesterday for the races at Fredericksburg; the rest of the family are well and join in love and good wishes for all at Bushfield. I am, &c.²⁸

27. In answer to this letter from Washington, Bushrod stated: "The motives which gave birth to the Society, were these. We conceived, that in a government where the voice and sentiments of the people are delivered by representation, the few who are elected to speak these sentiments are the servants of the electors; that in grand points of national concern, the people are the best judges of their wants, their own interests, and can more sensibly feel those evils, which they wish to be corrected; that upon these two principles they have a right to instruct their delegates; and that silence at a time when they had reason to apprehend a conduct in these servants contrary to their wishes would be highly criminal. We thought that an appearance of corruption was discoverable in the mass of the people, or, what is as bad, a total insensibility to their public interest. Persuaded of this, and equally convinced that this inattention proceeded more from the want of information than from want of real virtue, a number of the principal gentlemen in these four counties determined to assemble, for the purpose of inquiring and deliberating upon such subjects as were of the most interesting consequence, and to communicate their sentiments to the people in the form of instructions; which, if approved by them, are signed and sent to their delegates; if otherwise, they continue only the opinion of a few, and can have no weight.

"The people's attention being thus awakened to their public concerns, they are led to investigate the causes of those evils which oppress them, and to endeavor by some method to relieve them. The most uninquiring mind must, when put in action, perceive

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that the defect is either in the manners of the people, or in the misconduct of those, who, being intrusted to form salutary laws, have adopted the most destructive measures. The evil when seen may easily be removed; and unless the majority of the people are vitiated, which can hardly be the case, they would certainly be led to apply the only two possible remedies; the one, to exert more zeal in making a judicious choice of delegates; the other, to reform their manners. I am fully convinced that nothing could be more effective of the prosperity of this country, than the method you have pointed out of electing honest and able representatives. To recommend this to the attention of the people is a principal object with this Society.

“Thus you will perceive, that this institution assumes no other power, than that of recommending to the people an attention to their own interests, and of furnishing them with the sentiments and opinions of a few, which they may either reject or adopt. It is true, that a few designing men might creep into these societies; but I should hope that a majority will be virtuous. If this should be the case, their recommendation may have happy consequences; if the majority should unhappily be vicious, they are but the opinions of a few expressed collectively. In this, however, I am resolved, that as soon as I perceive that other motives than those of the public good influence their conduct, I will quit them.” This letter is not now found in the *Washington Papers*, but is quoted as given by Sparks.

28. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*.

In the “Letter Book,” page 186, in the *Washington Papers* at the end of September, 1786, occurs another indefensible piece of carelessness, in entering a letter to William Herb, dated November 8. Following it is a letter to Edmund Randolph, of which the following is all that survives, pages 187 to 190 having been torn from the “Letter Book” at some unknown time in the past: “By Doctr. Smart I return the books you were so obliging as to allow me the reading of: by him also I send you the Travels of the Marqs. de Chastellux for your perusal.

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"I felt for your disappointment the day you left this, and hope no accidents intervened afterwards to give further interruption to your journey. Unknowing of the quantity of rain which had fallen in the course of the night, I was never more surprized than in a ride I took to some of my plantations an hour or two after you went away, to find every place deluged. I"

Randolph left Mount Vernon Sept. 18, 1786, so this letter probably should be dated some time between September 18 and September 30. According to the "Letter Book" index, a letter to Betty Lewis, dated some time between October 1 and October 22, was entered on the missing pages.

***To JEREMIAH WADSWORTH**

Mount Vernon, October 22, 1786.

Dear Sir: I have received and thank you for the communications in your letter of the 1st. instr. It has given me much satisfaction, to find that the letter²⁹ I had written to my much lamented friend Genl. Greene (respecting his affair with Capt. Gun) had reached his hands. Had the case been otherwise, and he had harboured a suspicion of my inattention or neglect, the knowledge of it, would have given me real pain.

Persuaded as I always have been of Genl. Greene's integrity and worth, I spurned those reports which tended to columniate his conduct in the connection with Banks;³⁰ being perfectly convinced that whenever the matter should be investigated, his motives for entering into it would appear pure and unimpeachable. I was not without my fears though that he might suffer in a pecuniary way by his engagement with this man. I would fain hope however that the case may, ultimately, be otherwise; and that upon a final settlement of his affairs there will be a handsome competency for Mrs. Greene and the Children. But should the case be otherwise, and Mrs. Greene, yourself, and Mr. Rutledge would think proper to entrust my namesake G: Washington Greene to my care, I will give him as good

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an education as this Country (I mean the United States) will afford and will bring him up to either of the genteel professions that his frds. may chuse, or his own inclination shall lead him to pursue, at my own cost and expence.

I Condole very sincerely with Mrs. Greene (to whom please to tender my respects) and the rest of General Greenes friends on the loss the public, as well as his family, has sustained by the death of this valuable character, especially at this crisis, when the political machine seems pregnant with the most awful events.

My compliments if you please to Mrs. Wadsworth, and any of my old acquaintance who may happen to compose your circle. With much esteem and regd. I am etc.³¹

29. Of May 20, 1785.

30. John Banks.

31. From a photostat of the original kindly permitted by Hon. James W. Wadsworth, of New York City.

To DAVID HUMPHREYS

Mount Vernon, October 22, 1786.

My Dr. Humphreys: Your favor of the 24th. ulto. came to my hands about the middle of this month. For the enclosures it contained I pray you to receive my warmest acknowledgments and thanks. The Poem, tho' I profess not to be a connoisseur in these kind of writings, appears pretty in my eye, and has sentiment and elegance which must I think render it pleasing to others.

With respect to the circular letter,³² I see no cause for suppressing or altering any part of it, except as to the place of meeting. Philadelphia, on three accots. is my opinion must be more convenient to the majority of the delegation, than New York. 1st. as most central.

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2dly. because there are regularly established packet-boats, well accommodated for Passengers, to it from the Southern States; and 3dly. because it appears to me that the seat of Congress would not be so well for this meeting. When you have digested your thoughts for publication, in the case of Captn. Asgill, I would thank you for a copy of them; having arrested the account I had furnished Mr. Tilghman, with an assurance of a more authentic one for his friend in England.

I am pleased with the choice of Delegates which was made at your State meeting; and wish the Representatives of all the State societies may appear at the Genl. Meeting, with as good dispositions as I believe they will. It gives me pleasure also to hear that so many Officers are sent to your Assembly: I am persuaded they will carry with

32. See Washington's letter to the State societies of the Cincinnati, Oct. 31, 1786, *post*.

them more liberality of sentiments, than is to be found among any other class of Citizens. The speech of our friend Cobb was noble, worthy of a patriot and himself; as was the conduct of Genl. Sullivan. But for God's sake tell me what is the cause of all these commotions:³³ do they proceed from licentiousness, British-influence disseminated by the tories, or real grievances which admit of redress? If the latter, why were they delayed 'till the public mind had become so much agitated? If the former why are not the powers of Government tried at once? It is as well to be without, as not to live under their exercise. Commotions of this sort, like snow-balls, gather strength as they roll, if there is no opposition in the way to divide and crumble them. Do write me fully, I beseech you, on these matters; not only with respect to facts, but as to opinions of their tendency and issue. I am mortified beyond expression that in the moment of our acknowledged independence we should by our conduct verify the predictions of our transatlantic foe, and render ourselves ridiculous and contemptible in the eyes of all Europe. My health (I thank you for the enquiry) is restored to me; and all under this roof join me in most affectionate regards, and in regretting that your letter has held out no idea of visiting it again this winter, as you gave us hope of doing when you left us. To all the gentn. of my acquaintance who

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may happen to be in your circle, I beg to be remembered with sincere regard. To assure you of the sincerity of my friendship for you, would be unnecessary; as you must I think be perfectly satisfied of the high esteem and affection with which, I am, etc.³⁴

33. Shay's rebellion in Massachusetts.

34. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To GEORGE AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, October 25, 1786.

Dear George: It is natural for young married persons (who are launching into life) to look forward to a permanent establishment. If they are prudent, they will be *reasonably* solicitous to provide for those who come after, and have a right to look to them for support.

It is also natural for those who have passed the meridian of life, and are descending into the shades of darkness, to make arrangements for the disposal of the property of which they are possessed. The first of these observations will apply to you, and the second to myself. I have no doubt but that you and Fanny are as happy and contented in this family as circumstances will admit. Yet, something is still wanting to make that situation more stable and pleasing.

It is well known that the expensive mansion in which I am, as it were, involuntarily compelled to live, will admit of no diminution in my income; nor could it be expected if I now had, or ever should have descendants, that I either would, or ought in justice to deprive them of what the laws of nature, and the laws the land (if left to themselves) have declared to be their inheritance. The first however is not the case at present, and the second, not likely to be so hereafter.

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Under this statement then I may add that, it is my present intention to give you, at my death, my landed property in the neck; containing by estimation, between two and three thousand acres (by purchases from William Clifton and

George Brent) and that the reasons why I mention the matter to you at this time are, that you may, if you choose it, seat the negroes which Colo. Bassett has promised you, upon that part of the tract, on which Samuel Johnson formerly lived. And under this expectation and prospect, that you may, moreover, when it perfectly suits your inclination and convenience, be preparing for, and building thereon by degrees.

You may say, or think perhaps, that as there is a contingency tacked to this intimation, the offer is too precarious to hazard the expence of building; but if Mrs. Washington should survive me there is a moral certainty of my dying without issue, and should I be the longest liver, the matter in my opinion is almost as certain; for whilst I retain the reasoning faculties I shall never marry a girl; and it is not probable that I should have children by a woman of an age suitable to my own, should I be disposed to enter into a second marriage. However, that there may be no possibility of your sustaining a loss, the matter may rest on the footing of compensation. I do therefore hereby declare it to be, and it is my express meaning, that if by the event above alluded to, or any other, by which you may be deprived of the fee simple in the land herein mentioned (unless a full equivalent is given in lieu thereof) that I will pay the cost of any buildings which you may erect on the premises.

The use of the plantation, it is presumed, will be adequate for the fences with which it may be enclosed, and for the labour arising from the cultivation; nothing therefore need be said on that head.

Here then, the prospect of a permanent inheritance is placed in the opposite scale of possible disappointment, and you are to judge for yourself.

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I have been thus particular because I would be clearly understood. because it is not my wish to deceive. and because I would not³⁵ raise an expectation not warranted from the premises, by fair deduction.

Johnson's plantation as I believe, you know, is destitute of fencing; but there is timber at hand. The cleared land, whatever may have been the original quality of it, now is, by use, and more so by abuse, much gullied and in bad condition; but as there is a sufficiency of it for the hands you will get, it may soon by care, good management, and a proper course of cropping be recovered.

One thing more and I will close this letter. Do not infer from my proposing it to you to build, that I meant it as a hint for you to prepare another home. I had no such idea. To point you to a settlement which you might make at leizure, and with convenience, was all I had in view. More than once I have informed you that in proportion as age and its concomitants encrease upon me, I shall stand in need of some person in whose industry and integrity I can confide, for assistance. The double ties by which you are connected with this family (to say nothing of the favourable opinion we entertain of you) in the marriage union which has placed you differently from any other of my relations for this purpose; because no other married couple could give, or probably would receive, the same

35. The "Letter Book" copy has "even raise."

satisfaction by living in it that you³⁶ do. But whether you remain in the same house, or at a future day may remove to the place proposed, your services will be convenient and essential to me; because with your aid I shall be able to manage my concerns without having recourse to a Steward, which comports neither with my interest nor inclination to employ.

With very affe. regard I am &c.³⁷

To HENRY LEE

Mount Vernon, October 31, 1786.

My Dr. Sir: I am indebted to you for your several favors of the 1st. 11th. and 17th. of this instt: and shall reply to them in the order of their dates; but first let me thank you for the interesting communications imparted by them.

The picture which you have exhibited, and the accounts which are published of the commotions, and temper of numerous bodies in the Eastern States, are equally to be lamented and deprecated. They exhibit a melancholy proof of what our trans-Atlantic foe has predicted; and of another thing perhaps, which is still more to be regretted, and is yet more unaccountable, that mankind when left to themselves are unfit for their own Government. I am mortified beyond

36. The "Letter Book" copy has "and Fanny."

37. From a copy of the original kindly furnished by Stephen Decatur, jr., of Garden City, N. Y.

expression when I view the clouds that have spread over the brightest morn that ever dawned upon any Country. In a word, I am lost in amazement when I behold what intrigue, the interested views of desperate characters, ignorance and jealousy of the minor part, are capable of effecting, as a scourge on the major part of our fellow Citizens of the Union; for it is hardly to be supposed that the great body of the people, tho' they will not act, can be so shortsighted, or enveloped in darkness, as not to see rays of a distant sun thro' all this mist of intoxication and folly.

You talk, my good Sir, of employing influence to appease the present tumults in Massachusetts. I know not where that influence is to be found; and if attainable, that it would be a proper remedy for the disorders. Influence is no Government. Let us have

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one by which our lives, liberties and properties will be secured; or let us know the worst at once. Under these impressions, my humble opinion is, that there is a call for decision. Know precisely what the insurgents aim at. If they have *real* grievances, redress them if possible; or acknowledge the justice of them, and your inability to do it in the present moment. If they have not, employ the force of government against them at once. If this is inadequate, *all* will be convinced that the superstructure is bad, or wants support. To be more exposed in the eyes of the world, and more contemptible than we already are, is hardly possible. To delay one or the other of these, is to exasperate

on the one hand, or to give confidence on the other, and will add to their numbers; for, like snow-balls, such bodies increase by every movement, unless there is something in the way to obstruct and crumble them before the weight is too great and irresistible.

These are my sentiments. Precedents are dangerous things; let the reins of government then be braced and held with a steady hand, and every violation of the Constitution be reprehended: if defective, let it be amended, but not suffered to be trampled upon whilst it has an existence.

With respect to the navigation of the Mississippi, you already know my sentiments thereon: they have been uniformly the same, and as I have observed to you in a former letter, are controverted by one consideration *only* of weight, and that is the operation the occlusion of it may have on the minds of the western settlers, who will not consider the subject in a relative point of view or on a comprehensive scale, and may be influenced by the demagogues of the country to acts of extravagance and desperation, under a popular declamation that their interests are sacrificed. Colo. Mason, at present, is in a fit of the gout; what [his] sentiments on the subject are, I know not, nor whether he will be able to attend the Assembly during the present Session. For some reasons, however, (which need not be mentioned) I am inclined to believe he will advocate the navigation of that river. But in all matters of great national moment, the only true line of conduct, in my opinion, is, dispassionately to compare the advantages and disadvantages of the measure proposed,

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and decide from the balance. The lesser evil, where there is a choice of them, should always yield to the greater. What benefits (more than we

now enjoy) are to be obtained by such a [Treaty as you have delineated with Spain, I am not enough of a Commercial man to give any opinion on. The China³⁹ came to hand without much damage; and I thank you for your attention in procuring and forwarding of it to me. Mrs. Washington joins me in best wishes for Mrs. Lee and yourself and I am &c.]⁴⁰

To GOVERNOR WILLIAM MOULTRIE

Mount Vernon, October 31, 1786.

Dr. Sir: As soon as your Excellency's favor of the 7th. of Augt., came to my hands, I forwarded the enclosure therein, to Mr. Brindley under cover to Saml. Hughes Esqr. Herewith you will receive their answers.

Presuming that your Excellency is President of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of South Carolina, I have the honor of addressing the enclosed circular letter to you. If I am mistaken, I pray you to forward it to the right person. Mrs. Washington joins me in every good wish for Mrs. Moultrie and yourself, and with sentiments of great regard and respect, I have the honor, etc.

P.S. Permit me to request

39. This was the well known "Cincinnati China," in which each piece was marked with the figure of Fame bearing the eagle emblem of the Society. Lee purchased this set, of about 306 pieces, in New York City, for Washington, at a cost of £45: 5: 0.

40. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*. The portion within brackets is from the original fragment in the New York Public Library.

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the favor of you to direct the blank cover herewith sent, to the President of the Georgia Society of the Cincinnati, and cause it to be forwarded by the first safe conveyance that may offer.⁴¹

To PRESIDENT BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Mount Vernon, November 3, 1786.

Dr. Sir: The letter, of which I have the honor to enclose your Excellency an extract, and the Addresses, came to my hands a few days since. Whether the latter are originals or copies, and whether any steps have been taken in compliance with Sir Edwd. Newenham's wishes, you can better decide than I. Also, if there has not, what is best to be done with the application.

If I mistake not, this case militates with a resolve of Congress, which declares that none but Citizens of these United States shall hold Consular appointments under it; but how far the singularity of the application, from such a character and under such an enumeration of circumstances, may occasion a departure therefrom (if my belief is founded) is not for me to determine.

This letter to you, My good Sir, is the first move I have made in this business; and I will await your sentiments before I make another. I am, as I hope you will always believe me to be, with the greatest respect and regard, Dr. Sir, etc.⁴⁵

41. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

45. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To JAMES MADISON**

Mount Vernon, November 5, 1786.

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My dear Sir: I thank you for the communications in your letter of the first instt. The decision of the House on the question respecting a paper emission, is portentous I hope, of an auspicious Session. It may certainly be classed among the important questions of the present day; and merited the serious consideration of the Assembly. Fain would I hope, that the great, and most important of all objects, the foederal governmt., may be considered with that calm and deliberate attention which the magnitude of it so loudly calls for at this critical moment. Let prejudices, unreasonable jealousies, and local interest yield to reason and liberality. Let us look to our National character, and to things beyond the present period. No morn ever dawned more favourably than ours did; and no day was ever more clouded than the present! Wisdom, and good examples are necessary at this time to rescue the political machine from the impending storm. Virginia has now an opportunity to set the latter, and has enough of the former, I hope, to take the lead in promoting this great and arduous work. Without some alteration in our political creed, the superstructure we have been seven years raising at the expence of so much blood and treasure, must fall. We are fast verging to anarchy and confusion!

A letter which I have just received from Genl Knox, who had just returned from Massachusetts (whither he had been sent by Congress consequent of the commotion in that State)

is replete with melancholy information of the temper, and designs of a considerable part of that people. Among other things he says,

there creed is, that the property of the United States, has been protected from confiscation of Britain by the joint exertions of *all* , and therefore ought to be the *common property* of all. And he that attempts opposition to this creed is an enemy to equity and justice, and ought to be swept from off the face of the Earth.

again

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They are determined to anihilate all debts public and private, and have Agrarian Laws, which are easily effected by the means of unfunded paper money which shall be a tender in all cases whatever.

He adds

The numbers of these people amount in Massachusetts to about one fifth part of several populous Counties, and to them may be collected, people of similar sentiments from the States of Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, so as to constitute a body of twelve or fifteen thousand desperate, and unprincipled men. They are chiefly of the young and active part of the Community.

How melancholy is the reflection, that in so short a space, we should have made such large strides towards fulfilling the prediction of our transatlantic foe! "leave them to themselves, and their government will soon dissolve." Will not the wise and good strive hard to avert this evil? Or will their supineness suffer ignorance, and the arts of self-interested designing disaffected and desperate characters, to involve this rising empire in wretchedness and contempt? What stronger evidence can be given of the want of energy in our governments than these disorders? If there exists not a power to check them, what security has a man for life, liberty, or property? To you, I am sure I need not add aught on this subject, the consequences of a lax, or

inefficient government, are too obvious to be dwelt on. Thirteen Sovereignties pulling against each other, and all tugging at the foederal head will soon bring ruin on the whole; whereas a liberal, and energetic Constitution, well guarded and closely watched, to prevent incroachments, might restore us to that degree of respectability and consequence, to which we had a fair claim, and the brightest prospect of attaining. With sentiments of the sincerest esteem etc.⁴⁶

***To GOVERNOR GEORGE CLINTON**

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Mount Vernon, November 5, 1786.

Dear Sir: Not having heard, or not recollecting who the President of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of New York is, I take the liberty of giving you the trouble of the enclosed.

I am endeavouring by the sale of Land, to raise money to pay for my Moiety of the purchase on the Mohawk River. So soon as this is effected I will write your Excellency more fully. In the meantime, with every good wish for Mrs. Clinton and the rest of your family, in which Mrs. Washington cordially unites, I am etc.⁴⁷

46. From a facsimile in the *Washington-Madison Papers* sales catalogue (The McGuire Collection), 1892.

47. From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Judge E. A. Armstrong, of Princeton, N.J.

To DAVID STUART

Mount Vernon, November 5, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Enclosed is a Petition from the Directors of the Potomac Company, which they request you to present; and to use your endeavours to obtain the prolongation which is prayed for therein. The Assembly need be under no apprehension of unnecessary delay. Interest and inclination equally prompt the Company to dispatch. To shorten the time required may occasion a contrariety in the acts of the different assemblies, and would create confusion, trouble and delay in the business. We hope therefore, no attempt will be made to do this.

As the Petition recites the causes which have given rise to the application, and the facts are notorious, I shall add nothing in support of it.

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I also give you the trouble of a small matter which concerns myself only. It is, if you shall see no impropriety from the lapse of time, (which is injurious only to myself) to offer the enclosed accounts when you shall find a fit opportunity, for payment. The circumstances are these.

In the year 1774, I bought a number of servants, hired many freemen, and sent negroes to the Ohio for the purpose of saving, seating and improving my military Lands agreeably to the Laws then existing. The Indian disturbances which obliged Lord Dunmore to embody and march the Militia into that Country, checked my operations; and the seizure of part of my goods (as will appear by these certificates) compelled me the next year, to encounter the same expence, trouble and difficulty, and no Assembly happening that could or would take cognizance of such claims, before my departure from this State, in May 1775;

the Certificates during my absence, and the frequent removal of my papers, (to keep them from the hands of the enemy) got so intermixed as not to be found till very lately. If these circumstances, which are truly related, are insufficient to obtain compensation without subjecting the question to much disputation, I had rather undergo the loss, than the mortification of an opposition to a measure which is merely personal.

As we are to be made rich by the maggoty-bay Pease; might it not be well for you to enquire how, in what manner this great good is to be accomplished; particularly, when they are to be sowed, the quantity to the acre, preparation of the ground and nature of the soil best adapted to them, whether they are to be ploughed in as a manure, and in what stage of their growth; or whether the fall of the leaf alone is sufficient to answer this purpose, how the seed is sowed, and the quantity to be obtained from an acre, &c. &c. Mr. Savage,⁴⁸ or some of the Gentn. from the Eastern shore, can no doubt give full information on all these heads.

Will you be so good as to enquire if Spring barley can be had, in what quantity, at what price, and how it could be got here. The family all join me in best wishes for you. Mrs.

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Stuart who is here and will put a letter under cover with this, will tell you I presume that she and the Children are all well. I am, etc.

48. George Savage, of Northampton County, Va.

P.S. If you could inform me what sum, and at what time I may depend upon the Estate of Mr. Custis for it, it would be obliging. My want of money presses. I must sell something if I cannot receive part of what is owing to me.⁴⁹

To THOMAS WEST

Mount Vernon, November 6, 1786.

Sir: From the *last* application which was made to you, I expected the papers so long promised, a fortnight ago. If you have any objection to my receiving them in order to effect a final settlement of the Admn. of Colo. Thos. Colvill's Estate, I beg you will have candour enough to declare it; that I may know what further steps are necessary for me to take to bring this business to a close.

I think I have been ungenteely treated, to be put off seven months in obtaining what was promised in three weeks, and reiterated several times since. I have had repeated applications made to me, as well from the Debtors to, as the Creditors of that Estate, for settlements, and could do no more than assure the applicants that the moment I was furnished with the necessary documents, I shou'd be ready to proceed to the business. I am anxious to do this on many accots.; one of which is, that unfavorable suspicions will result from these delays. My wish is to avoid them. I am, etc.⁵¹

49. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

51. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN FRANCIS MERCER

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Mount Vernon, November 6, 1786.

Dr. Sir: It was not 'till after you had left this place, that I received your letter of the 4th. ulto. Altho' I have great repugnance to encreasing my Slaves by purchase; yet as it seems so inconvenient to you to make payment by other modes than those you have proposed, and so injurious as not to be accomplished at a less loss than fifty or more Pr. Ct. I will take six, or more negroes of you, if you can spare such as will answer my purpose; upon the terms offered in your former letter. The negroes I want are males: three or four young fellows for Ditchers; and the like number of well grown lads for artificers. It is for you to determine whether you can supply me with such negroes. If you agree to do it, and will appoint a time, I would send for them, relying on your word, that the whole are healthy, and none of them addicted to tuning away. The latter I abominate; and unhealthy negroes, woman, or children would not suit my purposes on *any terms* .

If you accede to this proposition I will extend it. I will take all the good and merchantable wheat and indian Corn you may have for sale, at a reasonable price (the first immediately, the latter at a proper time), and Military Certificates of this State for the balance of my claim, at the difference which *really* exists between them and specie; altho' I never intended to possess one of them on *any terms whatever* in a depreciated state. If these proposals are agreeable

to you in all their parts, I should be glad to receive a decided and speedy answer; because in that case I will no longer look to you for the means of discharging those Debts I have enumerated to you, and to do which I am exceedingly anxious, but will endeavour without more delay, to sell land to enable me to pay them.

I had written thus far, when Colo. Simms called, on his way from Charles Coty. Court, to obtain some information respecting your suit against Combs. I was naturally led by the interest I thought I had in this business, to enquire into the state of it; and was told, if Mr. Ellzey's absence did not impede the sitting of Loudoun Court, he expected next

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week to obtain judgments for more than a thousand pounds: but guess Sir, what my surprize must have been, when he added that every shilling of this money was assigned to a Mr. Colston, and authority given to receive it as fast as it could be recovered. I had flattered myself that my forbearance for near fifteen years, and the disposition I have discovered (since the negotiation of the business seems to have got into your hands) to accommodate my wants as much as I possibly could to your convenience, merited more candid treatment. You cannot, I think, have forgotten the repeated assurances you have given me, that the monies arising from this fund should be sacredly appropriated to the discharge of my claim, whilst any of it remained. If this was possible, your letters in my possession would explicitly remind you of them. A conduct so extreamly unfair, ungenerous, and disingenuous, I cou'd not suffer to pass over unnoticed.

I send herewith the remainder of the blank Deeds which were formerly put into my hands by your brother James Mercer Esqr.,

as also the survey and partition of the Shannandoah tract, into the Lotts by which the land was sold, that you may fill them up as occasion may require. If it is *absolutely* necessary for me to sign the Deeds for conveyance of these Lotts, now the business by a decree of [the high Court of Chancery is taken out of my hands and put into yours, I will do it; otherwise, having stronger reasons than ever against resuming any agency in this business I would wish to decline it. I am etc.

Your letter of the 21st. Ult. requesting me to execute a Deed to Mr. Rawleigh Colston, for the lott No. 7, has been delivered to me. You now will receive the only Deeds in my possession, and the Survey of the Shanondoah tract; and can do with them as circumstances may require. If it is indispensably necessary for me to convey the title, and you shall accompany the return of the Deed with authority for me to do so, I will go to Alexa. and execute it before evidences who will prove it in Fredk. Ct.]52

To BENJAMIN LINCOLN

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Mount Vernon, November 7, 1786.

My Dr. Sir: I have seen, I think, your name as President of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Massachusetts. I therefore give you the trouble of the enclosed Address.

I hope your wishes were perfectly accomplished by your Eastern trip. Are your people getting mad? are we to have the goodly fabrick we were nine years raising, pulled over our heads? What is the cause of all this? When and how is it to end?

I need not tell you how much I am, etc.⁵³

52. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*. The portion in brackets is from a facsimile in a sales catalogue, 1936.

See note on p. 24, *ante*, regarding a letter dated Nov. 8, 1786, addressed to William Heth.

53. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On November 9 Washington wrote again to Lincoln, forwarding bills of exchange for Doctor Gordon. "I am sorry the Doctrs. Commission has given his friends so much trouble; tho' it can not be imputed to him, but must be considered as one of the lightest evils resulting from a paper currency." A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

***To JAMES McHENRY**

Mount Vernon, November 11, 1786.

My dear Sir: I met your favor of the 5th., in Alexandria yesterday. Today I dispatched one of my Overseers and two Servants for the Jack and mules which are arrived at Baltimore.

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The Pheasants and Patridges, I pray you to procure a passage for them by Water, in the Packet. To bring them by Land would be troublesome, and might perhaps be dangerous for them. Be so good as to let me know the expence of these importations, and the cost of their detention in Baltimore. It shall be immediately paid, with many thanks to you, for your obliging attention to the business.

If you have particular information from my good friend the Marquis de la Fayette respecting the above things, I shall be obliged to you for it; his letter to me takes no notice of them, altho' I had for sometime been expectating one Jack and two she Asses through his medium; but by no means as a present.

One of the Servants who accompany's my Overseer, belongs to the Honble. William Drayton of Charleston So. Ca. This Gentn. Spent a day or two here on his return from New York, and at Dumfries (proceeding on) the above fellow run away from him and came here. He goes to Baltimore under the impression of assisting in bringing the Jack and Mules home, but the real design of sending him there is to have him shipped for Charleston, if the Packet (which I am informed is regularly established betwn. that place and Baltimore,) or any other vessel is on the point of sailing for the former. Mr. Drayton will readily pay the Captn. for his passage, and other incidental expences, having intimated this in a letter to my Nephew; but if any doubt is entertained of it, I will see it done. Under this relation of the Circumstances attending [mutilated] way I would beg of you, my good Sir, (if an opportunity presents) to have him shipped, and previously secured.

The fellow *pretends* a willingness to return to his master, but I think it would be unsafe to trust to this, especially as he has discovered a great inclination to get back to Philadelphia (with a view *he says* of taking a passage from thence)

Why will you not make a small excursion to see an old acquaintance. It is unnecessary I hope to assure you of the pleasure it would give. Yr. etc.

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PS. Engage the Master of the Packet Boat to drop the Birds at this place as he passes by, otherwise I shall have to send to Alexandria for them.⁵⁴

To THOMAS JOHNSON

Mount Vernon, November 12, 1786.

Dr. Sir: On a supposition that you are now at Annapolis, the Petition of the Directors of the Potomac Company, is enclosed to your care. A Duplicate has been forwarded to the Assembly of this State. The fate of it I have not heard, but entertain no doubt of its favorable reception, as there are many auspicious proofs of liberality and justice already exhibited in the proceedings of it this Session.

I hope the same spirit will mark

⁵⁴.From a photograph in the photostats of the *McHenry Papers* in the Library of Congress.

the proceedings of yours. The want of energy in the federal government; the pulling of one State, and parts of States against another; And the Commotion among the Eastern people, have sunk our national character much below par; and have brought our politics and credit to the brink of a precipice. A step or two more must plunge us unto inextricable ruin. Liberality, justice and unanimity in those States, wch. do not appear to have drank so deep of the cup of folly, may yet retrieve our affairs; but no time is to be lost in essaying the reparation of them.

I have written to no gentlemen in your Assembly respecting the Potomac business but yourself, the justice of the case and your management of it, will ensure success. With great regard and respect, I am, etc.⁵⁵

To ROBERT ALEXANDER

Library of Congress

Mount Vernon, November 14, 1786.

Sir: Fifteen months ago I informed you in as explicit language as I was master of, of my want of the money you are indebted to me. I have waited (considering the urgency of my call) with patience to see if you would comply with the demand. But no disposition having

55. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

yet appeared in you to do this; I find myself under the disagreeable necessity of informing you, that unless you name a time not far distant for payment, and secure the same to me without delay, that I shall (tho' very reluctantly, as I think you have abundant reason to conclude from my long forbearance) have recourse to the most effectual mode the Law will give me to obtain justice.

It will avail nothing Sir, for you to repeat to me the claim you have upon Mr. Custis's Estate. This, independent of the Law suit, is, I am told, very trifling; but were it otherwise, his Affairs and mine now are, and have long been as distinct as yours and mine. If justice is denied you there, seek it; but let it be no plea for withholding my money which ought to have been refunded to me twelve or fifteen years ago, before your dealings with Mr. Custis came into existence. I am, etc.⁵⁶

To MRS. ANNE ENNIS

Mount Vernon, November 15, 1786.

Madam: Your letter, or Memorial dated the 12th. of July, in Dublin, came to my hands yesterday under cover of a letter from Mr. Peter Trenor of the 8th. inst:

The Memorial mis-states several facts, one of them materially; for I have not, nor never had one shilling of the late

56. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

Mrs. Savage's property in my hands: on the contrary, merely to relieve that Lady from the distress she represented herself to be in, I sent her in the year 57 a Bill for £ 57 which sum is yet due tome. The circumstances attending that unfortunate Lady and her Estate are these. Her first husband, the Revd. Chas. Green, left all his property real and personal to her, estimated at about £5000 current money of this State: not in trust, as you set forth, but at her absolute disposal. When she was about to enter into her second marriage, with Doctr. Savage, she previously thereto made this Estate over to him, securing an annuity of £100 currency, for the term of her life, if it should be demanded: And it was this sum, which was secured to her by a trust bond to Bryan Fairfax Esqr. and myself. The unhappy differences which soon arose and occasioned a separation between the Doctor and her, obliged Mr. Fairfax and myself, in order to obtain support for Mrs. Savage, to put the Bond in suit. The Doctor (who I believe might very properly be classed among the worst of men) made use of every subterfuge, and practiced all the chicanery of the Law to postpone the payment; which he was well enabled to do, as there was a suspension of our Courts of justice consequent of the dispute with Great Britain. However, when no longer able to stave off judgment at Common Law, he threw the matter into the high Court of Chancery of this State, where it now is. We are encouraged by our Lawyer to expect a final issue of the business

57. Left blank in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

in a term or two more; but what reliance is to be placed on these assurances, is not for me to decide.

As soon as the money is finally recovered, and in the hands of Mr. Fairfax and myself, we have neither the power nor inclination to withhold it one moment from the Executors of the deceased Mrs. Savage; but it will readily occur to you Madam, that for our security, there must be an attested Copy of the Will, under the Seal of the Corporation where it is

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recorded, annexed to a regular power of Attorney (to be proved in this Country) from the Exors. to some person here, to receive the money from us. It is the business of the Exors, not of the Trustees, to settle the accounts and pay the legacies of the Testator.

I have never seen any *authentic* copy of the Will. In the one which was shewn to me by a Mr. Moore of Baltimore I was not named as an Executor; If I had, it would not have been agreeable to me to have acted. I am, etc.⁵⁸

***To ARTHUR YOUNG**

Mount Vernon in Virginia, November 15, 1786.

Sir: The enclosed is a duplicate of the letter I had the honor of writing to you the 6th. of August. The evil genius of the Vessel by which it was sent (which had detained her many weeks in this Country after the letters intended to go by her were ready,

58. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

agreeably to the owners appointment) pursued her to Sea, and obliged the Captain (when many days out) by the leaky condition in which she appeared, to return to an American Port. The uncertainty of his conduct with respect to the letters, is the apology I offer for giving you the trouble of the enclosed.

Since the date of it, I have had much satisfaction in perusing the Annals of Agriculture which you did me the favor to send me. If the testimony of my approbation, Sir, of your disinterested conduct and perseverance in publishing so useful and beneficial a work (than which nothing in my opinion can be more conducive to the welfare of your Country) will add ought to the satisfaction you must feel from the conscious discharge of this interesting duty to it, I give it with equal willingness and sincerity.

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In addition to the articles which my last requested the favor of you to provide for me, I pray you to have the goodness of forwarding what follows.

Eight bushels of what you call velvet (The Books being at a Bookbinders, I may have miscalled this Wheat) Wheat, of which I perceive you are an admirer.

Four bushels of Beans of the kind you most approve for the purposes of a Farm.

Eight bushels of the best kind of Spring Barley.

Eight bushels of the best kind of Oats, and

Eight bushels of Sainfoin Seed: all to be in good Sacks.

My Soil will come under the description of Loam; with a hard clay, or (if it had as much the properties as the appearance, might be denominated) marl, from eighteen Inches to three feet below the Surface. The heaviest Soil I have would hardly be called a stiff or binding Clay in Engld.; and none of it is a blowing Sand. The sort which approaches nearest the former, is a light gray; and that to the latter, of a yellow red. In a word the staple has been good, but by use and abuse it is brought into bad condition.

I have added this information, Sir, that you may be better able to decide on the kind of Seed most proper for my Farms. Permit me to ask one thing more. It is to favor me with your opinion, and a plan, of the most compleat and useful Farm yard, for Farms of about 500 Acres. In this I mean to comprehend the Barn, and every appurtenance which ought to be annexed to the yard. The simplest and most œconomical plan would be preferred, provided the requisites are all included. Mr. Welch will answer your draught for the cost of these articles, as before. He is advised of it. I have the honor etc.⁵⁹

To WAKELIN WELCH

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November 15, 1786.

Sir: I take the liberty of giving you the trouble of forwarding the enclosed letters to their Addresses. I have again requested the favor of Mr. Young to send me a few Seeds: the cost may be about Ten pounds,

59. From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, of New York City.

more or less; for the amount of which, and other small matters, (should he think proper to add them) I pray you to honor his Draft.

You would do me a singular favor by engaging the Captain who has charge of the vessel by which they may be sent, to put them in the cabbins or steerage. If they go into the hold of the vessel, the destruction of the seeds will be followed by a disappointment which would be of infinitely more importance to me than the cost of them.

Messrs. Forrest and Stoddard have Ships which pass by my door: so have Messrs. Drusina Ridder and Clark. I persuade myself the masters of any of these would so far oblige me as to be attentive to your recommendation of them: Captn. Johns of the Potomac Planter I am sure would.

I have a Farmer⁶⁰ who was sent to me from Gloucestershire in England by a friend of mine at Bath. He has now written for his wife to come to him, with her children, and to bring with her some seeds, implements of Husbandry &ca., to this Country. Bristol is their nearest Port, but opportunities from thence to this river rarely happening, I have recommended it to their friend and patron Mr. Peacy, to open a correspondence with you, or the House of Messrs. Forrest and Stoddard of London, that she may be advised of the sailing of a vessel from that place to this river as a more speedy and certain mode of

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conveyance; your compliance therein would be very pleasing to me, and very serviceable to an honest, old English farmer. I am, etc.⁶¹

60. James Bloxham.

61. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To BUSHROD WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, November 15, 1786.

Dear Bushrod: Your letter of the 31st. of October in reply to mine of the 30th. of Sept. came safe to hand. It was not the intention of my former letter either to condemn, or give my voice in favor of the Patriotic Society, of which you have now, but not before, declared yourself a member; nor do I mean to do it now. I offered observations under the information I had then received, the weight of which was to be considered. As first thoughts, they were undigested, and might be very erroneous.

That representatives ought to be the mouth of their Constituents, I do not deny, nor do I mean to call in question the right of the latter to instruct them. It is to the embarrassment, into which they may be thrown by these instructions in *national matters* that my objections lie. In speaking of national matters I look to the fœderal Government, which in my opinion it is the interest of every State to support; and to do this, as there are a variety of interests in the union, there must be a yielding of the parts to coalesce the whole. Now a County, a District, or even a State might decide on a measure which, tho' apparently for the benefit of it in its unconnected state, may be repugnant to the interests of the nation, and eventually to the State itself as a part of the confederation. If then, members go instructed, to the Assembly, from certain Districts, the requisitions of Congress repugnant to the sense of them, and all the lights which they may receive from the communications of that body to the Legislature, must be unavailing; altho'

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the nature and necessity of them, when the reasons therefor are fully expounded; which can only be given by Congress to the Assembly thro' the Executive, and which come before them in their legislative capacity, are as clear as the sun. In local matters which concern the District; or things which respect the internal police of the State, there may be nothing amiss in instructions. In national matters also, the *sense*, but not the *Law* of the District may be given, leaving the Delegates to judge from the nature of the case and the evidence before them.

The instructions of your Society as far as they have gone, meet my entire approbation, except in the article of commutables. Here, if I understand the meaning and design of the clause, I must disagree to it most heartily; for if the intention of it is to leave it optional with the person taxed to pay any staple commodity (Tobacco would be least exceptionable) in lieu of specie, the people will be burthened, a few speculators enriched, and the public derive no benefit from it. Have we not had a recent and melancholy proof of this during the war in the provision tax? Did not the people pay this in some way or other, perhaps badly; and was not the army almost starved? Can any instance be given where the public has sold Tobacco, Hemp, Flour or any other commodity upon as good terms as individuals have done it? Must not there be places of deposit for these commutables; Collectors, Storekeepers &c. &c. employed? These, rely on it, will sink one half, and a parcel of Speculators

will possess themselves of the other half. It was to these things that we owe the present depravity of the minds of so many people of this Country, and filled it with so many knaves and designing characters.

Among the great objects which you took into consideration at your meeting at Richmond, how comes it to pass, that you never turned your eyes to the inefficacy of the Fœderal Government, so as to instruct your Delegates to accede to the propositions of the Commrs. at Annapolis; or to devise some other mode to give it that energy, which is necessary to support a national character? Every man who considers the present

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constitution of it, and sees to what it is verging, trembles. The fabrick which took nine years, at the expense of much blood and treasure, to rear, now totters to the foundation, and without support must soon fall.

The determination of your Society to promote frugality and industry by example, to encourage manufactures, and to avoid dissipation, is highly praise-worthy: these, and premiums for the most useful discoveries in Agriculture within your district, the most profitable course of cropping, and the best method of fencing to save timber &c. would soon make us a rich and happy people. With every good wish for you and yours, in which your aunt joins. I am, &c.62

62. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To WILLIAM PEACEY

Mount Vernon, November 16, 1786.

Sir: Enclosed I give you the trouble of receiving the copy of a letter I had the honor of writing to you in behalf of Mr. James Bloxham. Since the date of it he has agreed to remain another year with me, and has written (as he informs me) in decided terms for his wife and family to come to him, and bring with them the seeds and implements which are enumerated in the enclosed letters.

As Vessels from Bristol (tho' the nearest shipping Port to her) do not often come to this River, or to any convenient place of debarkation, it wou'd be better, I conceive, for her to resolve on a passage from London at once; and if you Sir, in her behalf would open a correspondence with either Messrs. Forrest & Stoddard, or with Wakelin Welch Esqr. of that City, to the last of whom I have written on the subject, I am persuaded a passage cou'd be obtained and the time fixed for her to be there. Mr. Bloxham places so much confidence in your friendship for him, and patronage of his family, that I have no scruple in

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suggesting these ideas to you, tho' it is a liberty I should not have taken under any other circumstances.

If his wife brings seeds, it cannot be too strongly impressed upon her, to keep them out of the Ship's hold; for they will certainly heat and spoil if put there. Mr. Bloxham informs me that there is a young man of the name of Caleb Hale who is de

sireous of coming to this Country. I have mentioned to the old man the terms on which I would employ this Hale. I have no doubt of his finding the country answerable to his expectation, and his coming might be very satisfactory and serviceable to Mrs. Bloxham and her children on the passage, and previous to their embarkation. I have the honor, etc.⁶³

To THEODORICK BLAND

Mount Vernon, November 18, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Several matters in which I have been pretty closely engaged, having prevented my sending to the Post office with my usual regularity, is the cause of my not having got, and of course acknowledged, the receipt of your obliging favors of the 4th. and 9th. inst:⁶⁸ earlier than I now do. By ascribing this delay to the true cause, I shall stand acquitted of all seeming inattention.

Permit me now, Sir, to thank you for the interesting communications in your letters, and to express to you the sincere pleasure with which I am filled at hearing that the acts of the present Session are marked with wisdom, justice and liberality. The critical situation of our affairs calls for the most vigorous display of these virtues, and it is much to be wished that so good an example from so respectable a State will be attended with the most salutary

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63. This "Letter Book" copy varies in minor verbal details from a Toner transcript, in the Library of Congress, made from the original, which was said to be in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in 1892.

68. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

consequences to the Union.

No man entertains a higher sense of the necessity of revising the foederal System, and supporting its government, than I do; nor would any man more readily depart from a prescribed line of conduct to effect this, than myself, in any matters I am competent to. With these sentiments and under such impressions, notwithstanding my having bid adieu to the public walks of life in a public manner, I should if the partiality of my Country had called to me to the service you allude to in your letter of the 9th., have yielded assent, not from an opinion that I could have answered their purposes better, or with equability to many that might have been named, but to evince my gratitude for the numberless instances of the confidence they have placed in me, and my obedience to their call....69

69. The omitted portion is practically the same as that found in Washington's letter to James Madison, Nov. 18, 1786, *q. v.*

I thank you for the Cutting-box. The Drill-plough I promised to have made for you has been ready sometime, and wou'd have been sent to the care of Mr. Newton 'ere this; but the hourly expectation of receiving the Timothy seed I promised to obtain for you, induced me to keep it (as I did not imagine you would apply it to any use 'till the Spring) 'till both should go together. My best respects to Mrs. Bland. I am, etc.70

To SAMUEL VAUGHAN

Mount Vernon, November 18, 1786.

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My Dr. Sir: The obligations you are continually laying me under, are so great that I am quite overwhelmed and perfectly ashamed of myself for receiving them, notwithstanding your politeness leaves me without a choice.

70. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On November 18 James Lawson agreed with Washington to work as a ditcher. This agreement, in the writing of George Augustine Washington, is in the *Washington Papers*.

The picture of a battle in Germany, and the Jarrs came very safe. The first is fine: the latter is also fine and exceedingly handsome, they shall occupy the place you have named for them.

May I hope Sir, that you have heard of the safe arrival of your Lady and family in England. Every occasion which informs me of your health and happiness, is pleasing to me; but none would equal that of testifying under my own roof the sentiments of perfect esteem and regard, with which I have the honor, etc.⁶⁴

To JAMES MADISON

Mount Vernon, November 18, 1786.

My Dr. Sir: Not having sent to the Post Office with my usual regularity, your favor of the 8th. did not reach me in time for an earlier acknowledgment than of this date. It gives me the most sensible pleasure to hear that the acts of the present session are marked with wisdom, justice and liberality. They are the palladium of good policy, and the sure paths that lead to national happiness. Would to God every State would let these be the leading features of their constituent characters: those threatening clouds, which seem

64. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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ready to burst on the Confederacy, would soon dispel. The unanimity with which the Bill was received, for appointing Commissioners agreeably to the recommendation of the Convention at Annapolis; and the uninterrupted progress it has met with since, are indications of a favourable issue. It is a measure of equal necessity and magnitude; and may be the spring of reanimation.

Altho' I had bid adieu to the public walks of life in a public manner, and had resolved never more to tread that theatre; yet, if upon an occasion so interesting to the well-being of the Confederacy it should have been the wish of the Assembly that I should have been an associate in the business of revising the fœderal System; I should, from a sense of the obligation I am under for repeated proofs of confidence in me, more than from any opinion I should have entertained of my usefulness, have obeyed ks call; but it is now out of my power to do this with any degree of consistency,⁶⁵ the cause I will mention.

I presume you heard Sir, that I was first appointed, and have since been rechosen, President of the Society of the Cincinnati; and you may have understood also, that the triennial Genl. Meeting of this body is to be held in Philada. the first Monday in May next. Some particular reasons combining with the peculiar situation of my private concerns; the necessity of paying attention to them; a wish for retirement and relaxation from public cares, and rheumatic pains which I begin to feel very sensibly, induced me on the 31st ulto. to address a circular letter to each State society informing them of my intention not to be at the next

65. Madison's letter of Nov. 8, 1786, in the *Washington Papers*, stated that Washington's name was mentioned as the head of Virginia's delegation to the convention to revise the Federal Constitution. One of the broadside acts of the Virginia Legislature, dated Nov. 23, 1786, to appoint deputies to the convention to be held in Philadelphia in May next, is in the *Washington Papers*.

meeting, and of my desire not to be rechosen President. The Vice President is also informed of this, that the business of the Society may not be impeded by my absence. Under these circumstances it will readily be perceived that I could not appear at the same time and place on any other occasion, without giving offence to a very respectable and deserving part of the Community, the late officers of the American Army. I feel as you do for our acquaintance Colo. Lee;⁶⁶ better never have delegated than left him out, unless some glaring impropriety of conduct had been ascribed to him. I hear with pleasure that you are in the new choice. With sentiments of the highest esteem and affectn. I am &c.⁶⁷

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Mount Vernon, November 19, 1786.

My Dr. Marqs: On thursday last I received in very good order, from Baltimore, under the care of Monsr. Compoin, the most valuable things you could have sent me, a Jack⁷² and two she Asses, all of which are very fine. The Pheasants⁷³ and partridges are coming round by water, for these also I pray you to accept my thanks. Words, my dear Marquis, will not do justice to my feelings, when I acknowledge the obligation I am

66. Col. Henry Lee, who was not chosen a Delegate to the Continental Congress.

67. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

72. This Jack was named by Washington "The Knight of Malta."

73. Chinese pheasants.

under for the trouble and pains you have taken to procure, and forward these valuable animals to me.

Monsr. Compoin having brought no letter from you to me; having no instructions or orders to produce, and having lost with his pocket book a letter from your old aid Mr.

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McHenry to me, which might have contained some information; I am left entirely in the dark with respect to the cost of the Asses in Malta, and the expences attending them since. I therefore pray you My Dr. Marquis, to furnish me with an accot. of them as soon as possible, that I may delay no time in remitting you the amount.

As this letter is only intended to give you the earliest advice of the safe arrival of Monsr. Compoint and his charge, I shall as the Vessel by which it goes is now passing my door, add no more than those assurances, which you will ever believe me sincere it, of being with the most Affectionate regard, Yrs. etc.⁷⁴

To JAMES MERCER

Mount Vernon, November 19, 1786.

Dr. Sir: I was informed by your brother, Colo. Jno. Mercer, who with his family called here on their way to Annapolis, that by some discovery which had been lately made, it appears that Blair and McCool had not a legal right to dispose of the moiety of the 4 Mile run tract,

74. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

which belonged to Colo. Geoe: Mercer. This defect I presume, can easily be remedied, as you are his Executor and heir at Law.

It is the same to me to whom I pay the purchase money, if I am properly acquitted and assured of the title. I shall be obliged to you therefore to pass such a Deed of Confirmation for the moiety of the Land purchased from the above named persons, as to you shall seem proper. You drew the Deed from them to me, and have, I doubt not, the necessary documents for the one now asked: if not, I would furnish such papers as are in my possession. My wish is to have these matters made clear before I go hence, that no dispute may arise hereafter. With very great esteem, etc.⁷¹

***To DAVID STUART**

Mount Vernon, November 19, 1786.

Dear Sir: I have been favoured with your letters of the 8th. and 13th. Inst.; but not having sent to the Post Office with my usual regularity, I did not receive them so soon as I might have done from the date of the former.

I thank you for the interesting communications in both. It gives me sincere pleasure to find

71. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

that the proceedings of the present Assembly are marked with wisdom, liberality and Justice. These are the surest walks to public, and private happiness. The display of which by so respectable a part of the Union, at so important a crisis, will, I hope, be influential, and attended with happy consequences.

However delicate the revision of the federal system may appear, it is a work of indispensable necessity. The present constitution is inadequate. The superstructure totters to its foundation, and without help, will bury us in its ruins. Although I never more intended to appear on a public theatre, and had in a public manner bid adieu to public life; yet, if the voice of my Country had called me to this important duty, I might, in obedience to the repeated instances of its attention and confidence, have dispensed with these objections, but another now exists which would render my acceptance of this appointment impracticable, with any degree of consistency. It is this. The triennial General Meeting of the Society of the Cincinnati is to be holden in Philadelphia the first Monday in May next. Many reasons combining, some of a public, some of a private nature, to render it unpleasing, and inconvenient for me to attend it; I did on the 31st. ulto. address a circular letter to the State Societies, informing them of my intention not to be there, and desiring that I might no longer be rechosen President. The Vice Presidt. (Gates) has also been informed thereof, that the business of the Meeting might not be impeded on acct. of my

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absence. Under these circumstances, I could not be in Philadelphia precisely at the same moment on another occasion, without giving offence to a worthy and respectable part of the

American community, the late Officers of the American Army.

I will do as you advise with respect to the Certificates, and trouble you with them again. Colo. Mason, it is said, expresses an inclination to give his attendance but I question much his leavg. Gunston this Winter.

Pray what is become of that Superlative Villain, Posey?⁷⁵ It has been reported here, that he is run off to Georgia. By a letter I have just received from Mr. Hill, I find that the whole produce of my Estate below from the year 1774 together with the monies which Hill received from others on my acct., has got into that abandoned wretchs hands, not one shilling of which I presume, will ever got out of them. All here join me in sincere good wishes for you, and I am etc.

[H.S.P.]

To GOVERNOR EDMUND RANDOLPH

Mount Vernon, November 19, 1786.

Dr. Sir: It gave me great pleasure to hear that the voice of the Country had been directed to you as chief Magistrate of this Commonwealth, and that you had accepted the appointment.

Our affairs seem to be drawing to an awful crisis: it is necessary therefore that the abilities of every man

75. Price Posey.

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should he drawn into action in a public line, to rescue them if possible from impending ruin. As no one seems more fully impressed with the necessity of adopting such measures than yourself, so none is better qualified to be entrusted with the reins of Government. I congratulate you on this occasion, and with sincere regard and respect am, Dr. Sir, etc.⁷⁶

To COMTE D'ESTAING

Mount Vernon, November 19, 1786.

Sir: I have had the honor of receiving your letter of the 9th. of May, by the hands of Genl. Duplissis⁷⁷ who did me the honor to spend a few days with me on his way to Georgia. I am highly obliged to you for introducing to my acquaintance a Gentleman of so much worth and merit: his own personal qualifications are sufficient to ensure to him the regard and affection of all good men; but when to these are added his being the intimate friend and companion, and having preserved the life of Count d'Estaing, he will be doubly esteemed by every one who has the honor of knowing you. I sincerely wish that he may find the Country answerable to his expectation, and be induced to reside among us; if he should, America will make the valuable acquisition of a useful and worthy Citizen.

76. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

77. Brig. Gen. Jean Baptiste Vigournere Du Plessis, formerly Governor of St. Vincent, West Indies.

I need not tell you, Sir, how happy I should be to have the honor of paying my respects to you in this Country. Every person who tastes the sweets of American liberty, must esteem and revere you, and those other great characters among our good allies, who by your noble and generous exertions, were highly instrumental in procuring it. I have the honor, etc.⁷⁸

78. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To SAMUEL PURVIANCE

Mount Vernon, November 20, 1786.

Sir: Your letter of the 12th. instant came duly to hand. I should be very happy if it was in my power to render your friend Majr. Smith⁸⁰ any service by giving him the information which he desires; but as I do not remember to have received any recommendatory letter which he alludes to, nor have any knowledge of the payment of the officers of the Continental Army, much less of those who were in the pay of their respective States, I cannot do it, however desirous I may be of obliging the deserving soldier or worthy citizen.⁸¹ I am, etc.⁸²

To SAMUEL BRANTON⁸³

Mount Vernon, November 20, 1786.

Sir: I have received by Captn. Bartlet, your letter of the 27th. of July. The ass arrived safe, and the other articles agreeably to the Bill of lading. I am much obliged to you Sir, for your attention in executing my commn., and the polite manner in which you offer me your future services. The ass is undoubtedly one of the best kind that could be procured at Surinam; but I do not find it charged in your accot. If you will be so good as to let me know the price of it by the first opportunity, the money shall be remitted to you. I am, etc.⁸⁴

80. Maj. Nathaniel Smith. He had been, in 1776, captain of a Baltimore independent artillery company.

81. On November 20 Washington wrote practically this same letter to Major Smith, a copy of which is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

82. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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83. Branden(?).

84. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To WILLIAM DRAYTON

Mount Vernon, November 20, 1786.

Sir: I wish it was in my power to give you a more favorable accot. than the following, of your Servant Jack.

After absenting himself from you at Dumfries (as I believe my nephew has already informed you) he came here and remained quietly 'till the 12th.; when being informed by some gentlemen from Baltimore that a Packet from that place was on the point of sailing for Charleston, I sent him under the care of a very trusty Overseer to be shipped from that place, requesting a friend of mine in the Town to engage a passage and to provide everything for him on Ship board, that was necessary. When they arrived at Baltimore, unfortunately, the vessel was hove down. It became necessary therefore to commit him to Goal for security; but before this could be effected, he took advantage of a favorable moment and made his escape. Diligent, but ineffectual, search was instantly made, and it is supposed his object is Philadelpa.

The Gentleman to whose care I sent him has promised every endeavor in his power to apprehend him, but it is not easy to do this where there are numbers who had rather facilitate an escape than apprehend a run-away. I hope your journey was not much incommoded by this untoward step of your waiter. With sentiments of great esteem etc.79

79. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To RICHARD HARRISON

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Mount Vernon, November 20, 1786.

Sir: I have received your Letter of the 10th. of July together with the two Toledo Blades⁸⁵ sent by Captn. Sullivan.⁸⁶

I am much obliged to Mr. Carmichael for this polite mark of attention to me; but hope I shall have no occasion to use them. I should have been happy Sir, to have received them from you in person; but as your business will not yet permit you to return to your native Country, I must postpone the pleasure of seeing you to a future day, tho' I hope not a very distant one. I am, etc.⁸⁴

To WILLIAM HULL

Mount Vernon, November 20, 1786.

Dear Sir: I have received your letter of the 25th. of October.⁸⁷ I only write now to acknowledge the receipt of it, and to inform you that I shall be happy to do anything in my power to forward the settlement which you mention, or to oblige, in any way, any of my Compatriots in the field.

As soon as I have collected all the necessary and useful information I can respecting the matter, (which I will endeavour to do) I will with pleasure communicate it to you; for at present my knowledge of the Western Country is more general, than particular, especially in the parts

85. The swords were a gift from William Carmichael, then in Madrid.

86. Merchant captain, of the ship *Union*.

84. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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87. In the *Washington Papers*. In it Hull informed of an association of parties in Massachusetts to emigrate to the Northwest Territory.

of it to which I presume you have turned your eyes. From Fort Pitt, downwards as low as the Great Kanhawa I have a pretty accurate knowledge of the climate, Soil &c.; but below this river, and west of the Ohio my ideas are borrowed. I am, etc.⁸⁸

To WILLIAM HANSBOROUGH

Mount Vernon, November 22, 1786.

Sir: I have just received your letter of the 20th. inst: and can only inform you that I have nothing to do with respect to the collection of my Rents in your part of the Country. I have given it wholly to Mr. Muse, to act as he shall think proper; but have directed him to distress no one without sufficient cause. He will be able to judge of the validity of your reasons for not paying the Rent wch. is due from you, and will act accordingly. I am, etc.⁸⁸

88. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On November 21 Gilbert Simpson, of Truro Parish, Fairfax County, Va., signed a bond to Washington, to surrender the tenement he held on lease from William Clifton on or before Dec. 25, 1786. This bond, in the writing of Washington, is in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN FRANCIS MERCER

Mount Vernon, November 24, 1786.

Sir: Your servant having this moment put your letter of the 20th. inst: into my hands, and appearing to be in a great haste; I shall not detain him, especially as it is neither my wish nor intention to enter on the justification of my last to you.

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The evidence, on which the charge of unfairness &ca. was grounded, you have enclosed in Colo. Symm's own hand writing, (the amount of the other bonds in his possession appeared to me to be very trifling). The propriety, or impropriety of this charge, after this transcript and information is given, you are to judge; and whether Combs's bond is not among those assigned to Mr. Colston. Hickmans, a considerable debt, must also have been under this predicament, or Colston's application to me for a Deed was very improper.

I would fain hope that there is not a greater impropriety in my receiving interest on a bonded debt, which lay years without having any part of the principal or interest paid, than is to be found in others; especially when the very fund you assured me should be applied to the payment thereof, you are recovering with interest. But I will have done with this subject, and never more shall give you the trouble of hearing any further observations of mine thereon. What rough expression of mine to you at Richmond has been industriously reported, is for me yet to learn. Your letter conveys the first most distant hint I have ever heard of the matter; I certainly ought therefore to stand acquitted of having any agency in the circulation of it, if I was so ungentle as to have offered any.

I profess an entire ignorance of the real difference between military Certificates and specie; for never having had inclination or intention to deal in them, and rarely going from home, I have not been in the way of obtaining information on this subject. Nevertheless, I will take two thousand pounds of *Virginia military Certificates* at the price you offer, viz: four for one, so as to discharge five hundred pounds of my claim, and I will take 400 or more barrels of Indian Corn, provided a price is now *fixed* that I can obtain it at. and for your information I add that any quantity, I am told, may be had at 10/ Maryland Curry. per barrel. Colo. Hooe thinks less. If this price accords with your ideas, in order to ascertain the point decidedly, I will give it; but assure you at the same time that your disposing of it to any other and paying the amot. in money to me, would be quite as agreeable to me. Your accomodation was all I had in view, my own crop is, I presume, adequate to my consumption. With respect to the negroes, I conclude it is not in my power to answer your

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wishes, because it is as much against my inclination as it can be against your's, to hurt the feelings of those unhappy people by a separation of man and wife, or of families; because no others than such as I enumerated in my last will answer my purposes, and because the price exceeds what I *supposed* negroes would sell for in ready money; for, in this as with Certifi

cates, having had no intention to buy, I have made no enquiry into the price they sold at; but conceived that for ready money the best labouring negroes (which are the kind I wanted) might have been had for £60, £70, or at most £75. Upon the whole then, for the balance, I must take payment in the manner formerly mentioned by you at this place, unless you should think that young Bob, (who has only a father without a wife) Tom the baker, Nessey and David, and James and Valentine (if of sufficient size to go to trades) could be separated without much uneasiness, and the prices of them, if not really the ready money prices, cou'd be abated.

Your reply to this letter soon would be satisfactory, for I have just hired a compleat Ditcher with a view of putting several hands under him, and wish to know my prospects for it. I am, etc.

P. S. I rece'd, enclosed in your letter, 2 half Joes, and 7 guineas, £ in part payment, I presume, of the 15 guineas lent you.⁸⁹

To ROBERT TOWNSEND HOOE

Mount Vernon, November 27, 1786.

Dr. Sir: The plank I want is to floor a room 24 by 32 feet. it must be 24 feet long and 1½ inches thick, all of a colour, and entirely free from Knots and sap. More than the nett quantity is requisite, for allowances. If it were seasoned, so much the

⁸⁹. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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better; but this is hardly to be expected in plank of this particular kind.

If Mr. Swift can supply me, it will be better than to send to the Eastern shore; if he cannot, I then beg the favor of you to engage Messrs. Peterson and Taylor (I think the names are) to furnish me agreeably to the above Memom., as soon as possible. With much esteem, I am, etc.⁹⁰

To PRESLEY NEVILLE

Mount Vernon, November 27, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Accept my thanks for the information given me in your letter of the 25th. ulto. from the Court House of Washington, respecting the decision of one of my Ejectments. I have, since, been informed by Mr. Smith, of the favorable issue of the whole, and of the necessity there is of my paying immediate attention to the Tenements to prevent the waste and damage which otherwise will follow.

Consequent of this advice I send Mr. Lear, a young gentleman who lives with me, into that Country to take such measures for the preservation of my property as the exigency of the case, when investigated, may require. As it is more than probable he will see you, your friendly information of matters respecting this business, and advice to him would highly oblige me; as also your

90. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

civilities to him.

Altho' the present occupants have little right to look to me for indulgences, and were told not to expect them; yet, as they are now in my power, it is neither my wish nor intention to distress them further than the recovery of my property from their usurpation, must unavoidably involve them in. They may therefore become Tenants upon terms equitable

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between man and man, or purchasers, it being my intention to dispose of the Land, from a conviction that property at the distance that is from the proprietor of it, never can be converted to uses so beneficial as the money arising from the sales; because those in whose fidelity and care we can depend, are too independent, and generally have too much business of their own to attend to smaller matters; and others who are less qualified, and more ready to accept trusts of this sort, are too apt to abuse them: this I have found to my cost.

As Pittsburgh is a point to which emigrants from the northern and Eastern States, and foreigners almost universally, direct their first steps, you would do me a favor to let those who may enquire for cultivated places in your presence, know that that tract, as well as the other (commonly called Washington's bottom) in Fayette county, are for sale. I would sell them altogether, or in parcels; but not, by the latter mode, in such a manner as to injure the sale of the rest. I would also give credit for the whole or greatest part of the purchase money, provided the principal is well secured, and the interest arising therefrom regularly paid at my own house without trouble or delay. You would oblige me too, my good Sir, by giving me your

candid opinion of the value, or in other words, what these Lands ought to sell for upon the terms here mentioned.

If your Father is in that country now, I beg to be remembered to him and to Mrs. Neville. With esteem and regard, I am, etc.⁹³

To PHILIP MARSTELLER

Mount Vernon, November 27, 1786.

Sir: I send my Barge for the German family⁹¹ with which I agreed on Saturday last, and for their necessaries if they have any to bring. As I have no body about me who can converse with them in their own language, I pray you to inform them that it will be necessary they

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should exert themselves to learn English; that their residence in the room into which they will be first introduced may be temporary, as they probably will be removed from it as soon as I can conveniently provide another place (on *this Estate*) for them to live in; that they will have provisions given to them to dress in the manner they like best; that they may obtain vegetables, out of my Garden by applying to the Gardner, to eat with their meat, and

93. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

91. Daniel, Margaret, and Anna Overdonck.

lastly, that I wish to impress upon them in strong terms the propriety of diligent attention to their duty, as I shall expect this of them, and shall myself be hurt if their idle conduct obliges me to remind them of a breach of their contract.

As there is no hurry in the case, I will take a more leisure moment to write to you on the matter hinted to you already. I am, etc.

P. S. Please ask, and let me know if the man understands thatching houses with straw.92

To GEORGE McCARMICK

Mount Vernon, November 27, 1786.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 31st. of October, and thank you for the information contained therein. Since which I have obtained a full account of the decisions in my favor against the settlers of my Land on Miller's run, from Mr. Smith.

Altho' those people have little right to look to me for favor or indulgences, and were told, if they run me to the expence of a Law suit, that they were not to expect any; yet, as they are now in my power, it is not my wish or intention to distress them more than the recovery of

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my property obliges me. They may therefore continue on their respective places either as Tenants at an equitable rent which shall be deemed reasonable between man and man,

92. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

or as purchasers, if the terms can be agreed on between us; but they, nor no others will ever get it for 20/ pr. acre, this is five shillings less pr. acre, than these people would have given whilst the matter was in dispute, could we have agreed on the security and times of payment. It will be a matter of indifference to me whether I sell the Land altogether, or in parcels of 2, 3, 4 or 500 acres, provided in the latter case the price is proportioned to the quality of the Land and the improvements thereon; and provided also that it is laid off in regular form and in such a manner as not to injure the rest. Nor should I be very solicitous about the payments, if the principal is well secured and the interest regularly paid at my house without giving me any trouble in the collection of it. For if this should be the case I would immediately put the Bond or Bonds in suit. A part of the purchase money I should require down, or at a short period, perhaps one fourth. On these terms also I would dispose of my land in Fayette county, near Yohoghaney.

If I had known that you had removed from your former place of abode near my Land, to Cat-fish, I should not have taken the liberty of referring those who might wish to become purchasers of it, to you to shew them the land, as it was too inconvenient for you to do it; but would have requested this favor of Colo. Cannon, who lives more convenient. The same cause prevents my requesting you to have an eye to it now. It could only suit a person who lives near, and can know

almost every day, what is doing on the places, to take charge of them if the present occupants are determined to remove. But if your Jersey friends or others should want to become purchasers, you might oblige them and me too by letting them know that my lands are for sale.

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If it was really necessary to have the outlines of the Tract run, in order to ascertain the boundaries of it, I am very willing to pay the expence, but the course by which this was done ought to have been taken from the Patent as the final act.

I am much obliged to you for the information respecting the expeditions of Genl. Clarke⁹⁴ &c., and for the account from Detroit. I wish, most sincerely, that the first may answer the purpose of giving Peace to the Western Settlements.

Mr. Lear, a young gentleman who lives with me and who is the bearer of this letter, will probably deliver it. If he should stand in need of your advice or assistance, I pray you to give it to him. I am, etc.⁹⁵

To RICHARD BUTLER

Mount Vernon, November 27, 1786.

Dr. Sir: I have been requested by the Marqs. de la Fayette, in behalf of the Empress of Russia, to obtain a vocabulary of the languages of the Ohio Indians.

Previous to my hearing of your

94. George Rogers Clark. He led an expedition against the Wabash Indians in the summer of 1786.

95. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

appointment as superintendant of Indian affairs in that District, I had transmitted to Captn. Hutchins⁹⁶ a copy of the Marquis's letter, containing the above request; conceiving that it would be much in his power, from the opportunities which would present themselves whilst he was surveying the Western Lands, to do this; and praying him to lend his aid to effect the work for this respectable character.

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Since I have heard of your appointment to the above trust, and know to what intercourse with the Indians it must lead, I have resolved to ask the favor of your assistance also. If Capt. Hutchins is on the Ohio, he will shew you the paper which was transmitted to me by the Marquis, and which I forwarded to him. If he is not, it may be sufficient to inform you that it was no more than to insert English words and the names of things in one column, and the Indian therefore in others on the same line, under the different heads of Delaware, Shawanees, Wiendots &c. &c.

Your appointment gave me pleasure, as everything will do wch. contributes to your satisfaction and emolument, because I have a sincere regard for you. In your leisure hours, whilst you remain on the Ohio in discharge of the trust reposed in you, I should be glad to know the real temper and designs of the Western Indians, and the situation of affairs in that Country together with the politics of the people. And as I am anxious to learn with as much precision

96. Thomas Hutchins.

as your indubitable information goes to, the nature of the navigation of Beaver Creek; the distance, and what kind of portage there is between it and Cayahoga, or any other nearer navigation of the Muskingum, the distance and sort of portage across to the navigable waters of Cayahoga or Sandusky, and the kind of navigation therein, you would do me an acceptable favor to hand them to me, with the computed distances from the River Ohio by each of these routs, to the lake itself.

If you should not write to me by the return of the Bearer, I would beg leave to add that there is no way so certain of conveying letters to me, as to enclose them to your correspondent in Philadelphia, 'till a more direct Post is established with this part of the Country, accompanied by a request to him to put them in the Post office. Private conveyances, (unless by a person coming immediately to my house) I have always found

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the most tedious and most uncertain: from Philada. letters will reach me, frost permitting, in three or four days.

If you are at Pittsburgh, this letter will be presented to you by Mr. Lear, a deserving young gentleman who lives with me, and whom I beg leave to recommend to your civilities. He is sent by me to see the situation of my property on Miller's Run (lately recover'd) and to adopt some measures for the preservation and security of it. With sincere esteem and regard, I am, etc.⁹⁷

97. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN CANNON

Mount Vernon, November 28, 1786.

Sir: I have just been advised by Mr. Smith, my Counsel, of the favorable issue of the Ejectments I was compelled to bring for the recovery of my land in your neighbourhood; and of the necessity there is for me to appoint an Agent to take care of my interest therein.

As I am not acquainted with anyone, who lives near the land, in whom I could place such entire confidence as yourself, permit me to ask if you could make it convenient to take charge of this Tract, so far as to see that each tenement, for the preservation of it, has some person living thereon, upon the best terms you can get them. And that you may not conceive, Sir, that I mean to give trouble without compensation, I beg leave to inform you, that whatever you may think adequate to the former, I will readily allow.

Altho' the present occupants of it have little reason to expect favor or indulgences at my hands, yet as they are now in my power, I do not wish to distress them further than the repossession of my Land, and common justice to myself naturally tends to. I am willing therefore they should remain on their respective places at such a rent as shall appear reasonable and just between man and man; and this I am perfectly willing you should fix,

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without considering, or in any degree attending to the loss I have sustained by being kept out of my property for more than twelve years.

If you should incline to undertake this trust in my behalf, I shall be well satisfied with these or any other Tenants, for the ensuing year; a longer term, I do not at present incline to let the Tenements for, as it is my intention to sell the land if I can obtain what I conceive it is worth and would not encumber it with Leases.

From the present scarcity of money I know it would sell low for ready cash, or on short credit; but permit me to ask your candid opinion of its real worth, and what you think it would sell for if credit was given for three fourths of the purchase money, three, four, or five years, with interest to be regularly and punctually paid at my own house during that term; and whether you conceive it would be most advantageous for me to sell it by the tract, or in parcels of one, two, three, four, or five hundred acres, as may be most convenient to the purchasers?

Mr. Lear who lives with me, and who I expect will deliver this letter to you, will, if it is necessary, explain any matter that I may be deficient in.

I beg leave to recommend him to your civilities, and friendly advice what steps he had best take in this business, if you should be disinclined to engage in it yourself. With esteem, I am, etc.⁹⁸

98. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN STEPHENSON

Mount Vernon, November 28, 1786.

Dr. Sir: This Letter will be handed to you by Mr. Lear a young gentleman who lives with me, and who will pass a receipt in discharge of any money you may pay him on my account. I hope it will be convenient for you to discharge the whole, for it should be

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remembered that I have lain a long time out of what you are owing me, and that I can no more do without than another. My expences are high, and my calls great, or I should not have reminded you so often of what I had hoped you would have paid without any intimation of my wants. With best wishes for you and yours, I am, etc.⁹⁹

To THOMAS FREEMAN

Mount Vernon, November 28, 1786.

Sir: Mr. Smith having advised me of the decisions in my favor at the Nisi prius Court held for the county of Washington; and of the necessity there is for my sending, or appointing some person on the spot to attend to my interest in the recovered lands; I have, as you appeared fixed on a removal to Kentuckey in the Spring, and with difficulty could be induced to continue the management of my business in your

99. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

neighbourhood 'till now, sent Mr. Lear, who lives with me, to examine into the situation of the Tenements, views of the present occupants, and on the spot to make such arrangements in my behalf, as the exigency of the case may require, He will call upon you in his way out, or in; and by him I should be glad to know what has been done with my Negroes: if sold, to whom, on what credit and for what sum. I wish also to know whether you have received any more of my money; and in that case, how it has been applied: if any is coming to me Mr. Lear will afford a safe conveyance for it. I want also to know, in what situation, under whose occupation, and what the expectations are from my land near you, especially the place lately occupied by Simpson; and in what condition the mill is. I would not wish to have any of the places not already under leases, engaged for more than one year; because, as I am determined to sell the land if I can obtain a price adequate to what I conceive to be the worth of it, it might be considered as an incumbrance. To keep

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the buildings and fences in good repair may be essential, even if I gain nothing by the Rents.

Considering the present scarcity of money, I am sensible it would not answer to sell for ready Cash; but what do you suppose the tract near you would fetch if three, four, or five years credit (paying interest) should be given for three fourths of the purchase money? And what difference do you think there would be in the amount of the sales, between selling the tract entire, or by the Lotts as now laid off, or in three, four, or five hundred acre parcels? If any person should apply to you for information respecting

this Land and the terms, I would accomodate them in this manner; and with respect to price, I want no more pr. acre than such kind of land, with such credit sells at in the same part of the country. I am, etc.¹

***To JAMES McHENRY**

Mount Vernon, November 29, 1786.

Dear Sir: Your letters of the 18th. by the Packet, and 19th. by the Post, are both at hand. The Birds were landed yesterday. A Partridge died on the passage.

If Monsr. Campion's information is to be depended on, he had no letter from the Marquis de la Fayette or any other character in France for me; nothing confidential therefore could have been disclosed by the loss of his pocket book, unless it was deposited in your letter. His acct. is, that he was ordered to repair to L'Orient with the Asses and Birds, from whence *he* and *they* were to be Shipped by Messrs. Barauds. That the Marquis told him, letters should follow, and he supposes they will arrive in the French Packet. By Monsr. Campion I send the Guinea you paid for his board; if there are any other charges yet behind, I wish to be informed of them that they may be immediately paid. My sincere thanks are due to you, My dear Sir, for your kind attention to this business.

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1. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

Having received no intimation at, or previous to the arrival of Monsr. Campion respecting the light in which he ought to be viewed, I thought it best to err on the safe side, and therefore took him to my table, where he has conducted himself with modesty and propriety.

Under full conviction that the Asses were never intended as a present, and that the Chinese Pheasants (instead of costing 16 Gus. a pair as the Baltimore paragraphist has anounced to the public) came from the King's Aviary as a present to the Marquis for me, (for so says Monsr. Campion) I am concerned that such information should have been exhibited in a public gazette as appeared in the B. Papr. for it may be viewed as a contrivance to bespeak, what I should industriously have endeavoured to avoid, had I supposed it was so meant; a present. Was this publication confined to Maryland, or even to the United States, there would not be so much in it; but as these paragraphs for want of other matter to fill a Paper, are handed from one to another, and ultimately get into the British and French Gazettes; the Marquis will entertain a queer idea of it, if nothing more is meant than what was promised, and expected; that is, to be the instrument through the Medium of Adml. de Suffran (Govr. of the Island of Malta, or head of the Order) of procuring and forwarding them from that place to me. That he should have paid all the expences which attended the getting, and shipping them is beyond a doubt. It could not well be otherwise, as their procurement was a doubtful essay. As I have not however received a single line respecting these Animals, I do not undertake to contradict the report, but think the evidence of it, the cost, &ca. appears to have been too slight, to hand

it in such a dress to the public. With sincere esteem, etc.²

To DIEGO DE GARDOQUI

Mount Vernon, December 1, 1786.

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Sir: I have had the honor to receive the letter which your Excellency did me the favor of writing to me on the 18th ulto. together with the enclosure from the Prime Minister of Spain, for which, and the translation, I pray you to accept my grateful thanks.

Besides the pleasure I feel in making these acknowledgements, one object that prompts me to them at this early period, is, to beg that your Excely. will not take the trouble of being instrumental in procuring for me a She Ass (by means of which I might preserve the breed of the valuable Jack I received as a present from his Catholic Majesty). At all times and under any circumstances, I shou'd have been perfectly ashamed if an unguarded expression of mine should have been the cause of giving you trouble, but more so in the present. When I had the honor of addressing you last, I had actually sent to Surinam, where I was informed very good, though not of the first race of these animals, were to be had, for a she one; and besides, thro' the medium of my good friend the Marqs. de la Fayette, I had assurances and the further prospect of obtaining one or two from the Island

2. From a photograph of the original in the photostats of the *McHenry Papers* in the Library of Congress.

of Malta. I am quite unhappy therefore lest the information in my former letter, that "I am endeavouring to provide a female that the advantages which are to be derived from this Jack may not end with his life", should have been construed an expression of a wish that your Excely. would employ your influence to effect this purpose, and it is the inducement which has hastened me to an explanation and correction of the indigested manner in which information was communicated.

Rheumatic pains, with which of late I have been a good deal afflicted, and some other causes, will render it inconvenient for me to be in Philada. in May next as seems to be expected, and where one of my first pleasures would have been to have paid my respects to your Excellency.

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It will be to be regretted if a contrariety of sentiments respecting the navigation of the Mississippi, should impede that harmony and mutual intercourse of interests so essential between nations whose territories border on each other. I would fain hope therefore that the true and reciprocal benefits of Spain and the United States, in this case, as well as in all others which may arise between them, will be coolly and dispassionately considered before the ultimatum on either side is fixed. There is no ground on which treaties can be formed that will be found permanent or satisfactory, unless they have these for their basis: but however necessary it may be to inculcate this doctrine upon others, your Excellency I am sure is too much of a politician to need the remark, and too much a friend to these States to insist upon any measure, which the essential interests of your Nation, or the orders of your Court, may not have dictated, incompatible

therewith. With very great consideration and respect. I have the honor etc.⁴

To BATTAILE MUSE

Mount Vernon, December 4, 1786.

Sir: As the fifty bushels of wheat stands as an article of charge at # in your accot. against me, it may remain so, as a final settlement of the matter. Altho' I have no flour at present for sale, and have made no enquiry into the price of this article, I do not suppose I shall either loose or gain much in so small a quantity by fixing the wheat at this price.

With respect to the persons⁵ named in your letter of the 26th. ulto. (which is just come to hand) I can only repeat what I have often done before, in substance, and that is, that it is my wish to obtain justice to myself, but not to act with that rigor in effecting it, as to bring ruin, or even considerable distress upon poor families. Rather than do this, I would relinquish my claim; but in all cases of this kind, I would endeavor to draw a line between inability and dishonesty; where the former appears with good dispositions to industry and honesty, I would wish lenient means may be used; but where the intention appears

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fraudulent, no indulgencies should be given. These being my sentiments, you can apply them to the cases of Rector and Thompson

4. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

5. Charles Rector and John Thompson.

as your own judgment, under the circumstances as related, shall dictate, keeping the old proverb in view, not to "sue a beggar and catch a louse." This adage may apply also to Colo. Kennedy, otherwise if he will not give you security for paying the balance in six, nine, or even twelve months, (as he has assumed the payment, for without this he might have plead the act) I would sue him without further delay.

All these difficulties and losses have arisen from Rents lying over, unpaid from year to year; for which reason I am determined that my Rents in future shall be punctually discharged, unless there is some interposition of Providence which calls for forbearance. The best Landlord, I am perfectly convinced, is he who never suffers two rents to become due on the same tenement.

In the enclosed (which I request you to forward) I have consented to Fielding Lewis's getting timber, if the tenants having leases are willing, to build him a house in Rector-town; but what use he means to put it to afterwards, will, I dare say, puzzle him to tell. I am, etc.6

To JAMES TILGHMAN

Mount Vernon, December 4, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Your favor of the 14th. ulto. is but just come to hand, or an earlier reply shou'd have been made to it.

The inscription intended for the Tomb of my deceased friend meets my entire

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6. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

approbation;8 for I can assure you Sir, with much truth, that after I had opportunities of becoming well acquainted with his worth, no man enjoyed a greater share of my esteem, affection and confidence than Colo. Tilghman.

I now transmit you, for the satisfaction of the friend of your deceas'd son, a statement of the conduct which was observed towards Capt: Asgill during his confinement, by which his illiberality and want of candour will fully appear. These extracts are taken from authentic records, and contain every sentence wherein the name of that officer is mentioned according to my best knowledge and belief.

At length, with much difficulty, I have got all the papers which are to be found, respecting the affairs of the deceased Colo. Thos. Colvill, from the son of the principal acting Executor of the Will of that Gentleman, I have put them into the hands of a skilful lawyer to make, if possible, a proper statement of them for final settlement, and as soon as I can speak to any good purpose you shall again hear from me respecting the claim of Miss Anderson. With great esteem etc.9

8. A copy of this epitaph for Tench Tilghman is with James Tilghman's letter to Washington, Nov. 14, 1786, in the *Washington Papers*.

9. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To THOMAS PETERS10**

Mount Vernon, December 4, 1786.

Sir: Your Letter of the 18th. Ult. came duly to hand. From the number of fruitless enquiries I had made for *Spring* Barley before I applied to you, and the intervention between the date of my letter and your answer being pretty considerable I despaired of

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obtaining any of this grain, and therefore seeded the ground which was at first designated for this Crop with Wheat and Rye.

I have also since heard that many Gentlemen who have tried it (especially some on West River where I know the Lands are very fine and such as I conceived were well adapted for this grain) do not find it answerable to their expectation. Nevertheless as I wish to divide my Seed time and am desirous of sowing Clover and other grasses with Barley in preference to other grain I would gladly take fifty bushels of it and will depend *absolutely* upon *you* for this quantity which I pray may be sent me as soon as it can be procured, by the Packet. With respect to the latter I am anxious because having the seed in my possession I can lay out and prepare accordingly and not postpone my Oat Season in expectation of a Barley one and be disappointed at last of the latter as was the case last year.

If I find this essay likely to answer my expectations I shall be better able to talk with you on a Contract. The Barley may be accompanied by the machine you spoke of as eligible for cleaning it; and I shall thank you for sending one accordingly. Let me know decidedly if you please whether I may depend upon the above quantity of Barley in the manner mentioned. I have it now in my power (for it is offered to me) to get what I want from a Brewer in Philadelphia but I may

10. Of Baltimore, Md.

even fail here if my engagement with him is delayed long for your answer.

Can *good* Clover Seed (not imported Seed for that rarely is so) be bought at Baltimore? In what quantity, and at what price? There is not, I believe, a bushel of Barley of any kind in this neighbourhood for sale. A Mr. Wales who Brews in Alexandria procures all of this he can. I am etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

To FIELDING LEWIS⁷

Mount Vernon, December 4, 1786.

Sir: Your letter of the 11th of Octor. never came to my hands 'till yesterday. Altho' your disrespectful conduct towards me, in coming into this country and spending weeks therein without ever coming near me, entitles you to very little notice or favor from me; yet I consent that you may get timber from off my Land in Fauquier County to build a house on your Lott in Recter town. Having granted this, now let me ask you what your views were in purchasing a Lott in a place which, I presume, originated with and will end in two or three Gin Shops, which probably will exist no longer than they serve to ruin the proprietors, and those who make the most frequent applications to them. I am, &c.⁶

7. Nephew of Washington.

6. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To RAWLEIGH COLSTON

Mount Vernon, December 4, 1786.

Sir: Your favor of the 10th. of Novembr., (which did not reach me 'till within these three days) as well as the former by Mr. Ireland, came safe to hand.

Mr. Wright, whom I saw at Alexandria, will have informed you, that as the business respecting the affairs of the deceased Colo. *George* Mercer was transferred by a decree of the high Court of Chancery from me to Colo. *John* Mercer; and the Bonds and other papers assigned over to the latter, that it lay with him to settle the accounts and to decide on the propriety of making conveyances. The Deeds were only withheld 'till payment of the consideration money should be made, or satisfactory security should be given for the doing of it, and that (if it was necessary for me to do it at all) I could make no conveyance

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without his express direction; this being necessary for my justification and this I also repeated to Mr. Ireland in emphatical terms.

Since these conversations I have received a line from Colo. John Mercer requesting me to execute a Deed to you for one of the Lotts sold Mr. Hickman;¹¹ but as the Deeds for conveyance of these lands are much out of the usual form, (there being many parties to them) and all the papers respecting the business now out of my possession, I have, in answer to this request, desired him if it is *indispensably* necessary for me as the seller to convey, to have the deed (for there were some blank ones left) filled up and sent to me with authority for me to sign, and no delay should be found on my part. Having thus explained my sentiments of, and agency in this business, you will readily perceive to what quarter your future applications are to be directed. Considering

11. Joseph Hickman.

the light in which Mr. Ireland stood, I gave him a statement of the case in writing, that Mr. Stone might act in it agreeably to the dictates of his own judgment. or the orders of Colo. Mercer, with respect to the execution. I am, etc.¹²

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, December 5, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Your letters of the 15th of Octor. and 5th. of Novr. are both before me, and I shall reply to them in their order.

For your trouble in negotiating my Certificate I thank you. If it is necessary, in order that you may receive the half yearly interest thereon, I would wish you to keep it; if you can draw this without, it may be returned to me. In the mean time, inform me if you please if this Certificate can be converted into cash, and upon what terms, that if I should have occasion to make any purchases in Philada., I may know the amount of this fund. The

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Indents, to the amount of 84 50/90 Dollars, I have received, and note the credit given me for the year and half interest.

The Curtain stuff and nails are at hand safe, and will answer very well. The uncertainty of getting good *Spring* Barley (for I had made many fruitless enquiries in this State, and the parts of

12. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

Maryland bordering on it, before I wrote to you) induced me to put the ground which I had first allotted for this grain, into Wheat and Rye; but if you could secure and send to me by one of the first vessels bound from your Port to Alexanda. fifty bushels, I will yet find as much ground as will receive this quantity of Seed; or if you have engaged 100 bushels of this grain from Reuben Haines as the expression of your letter seems to import, I will readily take it, but would not chuse to be under any promise of supplying him with the produce of it: first, because being uncertain of the yield, and inclining to go pretty largely upon it if I find it likely to answer my purpose, I shall want a good deal for Seed, and 2dly because the freight around, it is to be feared, would sink too deep in the sales to render me any profit upon a small quantity.

The Clover Seed (as I conceived this had been a productive year of it) is high; yet I would beg you to send me 300 weight. As soon as I know the precise cost of this, and the Barley; the money shall be remitted, or if you have any dealings in Alexandria, and an order on me will answer your purposes equally as well, it shall be immediately paid.

If it is the same thing to Mr. Haines whether I take fifty or an hundred bushels, I shall, under the circumstances already mentioned, prefer the former quantity. It is so essential to every farmer to have his seeds by him in time, that I would urge in strong terms that these now required be sent to me by the first good *water* conveyance.

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The uncertainties and disappointments of last Spring, will always make me anxious of obtaining all my Seeds long before the seasons for sowing them shall have arrived. At any rate let me know by Post what it is I have to expect.

Best wishes attend Mrs. Biddle. I am, etc.

P.S. Are the Artichoke of Jerusalem to be had in the neighbourhood of Philada? Could as much of the root, or the seed, be got as would stock an acre? I want to bring it in with my other experiments for the benefit of stock.¹³

To JOHN FRANCIS MERCER

Mount Vernon, December 5, 1786.

Sir: As I have not yet received a reply to my last letter, but, since the date of it, have made some enquiry into the prices of negroes at the ready money sales of them, I take the liberty of informing you, previously to your writing, or my receiving an answer to the above letter, that as it is not likely we shall agree on a price, (in case you should be disposed to spare such negroes as would have answered my purposes) it is my wish to save you the trouble of adding anything more on the subject of them. Such as I pointed at might have been useful to me; but as I have no desire of adding to my present number by purchase, to accomodate you was the object I had principally in view; but I cannot think of allowing more to effect this, than the same kind of negroes would command at a sale of ready money, because in fact it is a discount of ready money, and for that species of property

13. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

which I have no inclination to possess. I mention the matter now lest the intimation of such sentiments after an acquiescence with my purposal, should you have been thereto disposed, might be construed a disposition to take advantage of circumstances to reduce

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the price; rather than a thought of this kind should be entertained, my choice is to await the money in any manner you shall please to offer it.

It was Mr. Hunter, not Colo. Hooe, that gave the information respecting the price of Corn, as mentioned in my last. I correct the mistake therefore, then made, that there may be no representation suspected in the accot.

As I assured you in my last that I had bid adieu to the altercation respecting the appropriation of the money arising from the Bonds in suit, so I can assure you I have no other motive for enclosing Mr. Colston's letter, which only came to my hands the day before yesterday than to let you see his sollicitude to obtain a Deed for the land for which he has paid the consideration money, and to repeat the assurances of my last, that if it is essential for me to execute the Deed, I am ready to do it when it is presented, and I am properly authorised by you so to do. I am, etc.¹⁴

14. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOSIAH WATSON

Mount Vernon, December 15, 1786.

Sir: I am exceedingly anxious, to bring the Administration of Colo. Colvill's Estate to a close. To do this, and to discharge some claims on it, (one of which is very pressing) it is become indispensably necessary that the Bond in which you are joined with the late Major Moody, should be paid off. I persuade myself there will be no further delay in doing it when the indulgencies which have already been given and when the circumstances attending this transaction are, moreover, recurred to. Tho' Majr. Moody stands for most in the Bond, he was not at the time it was taken, nor has he at any period since been considered as the principal. It will be remembered, I am

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certain, that I was assured on that occasion, (tho' a credit of twelve months was given) the Bond should not remain unpaid so long: five years have since elapsed. More than a year ago when application, thro' Mr. Lund Washington, was made for this money, he was referred, as he informed me, to the heir or Exor. of the deceased Mr. Moody; but under the circumstances of this case, I beg leave to add that I must look to you for payment. I would have waited yet longer in expectation of having this money tendered to me, but for the reasons above; and which I pray you to receive as the apology for my being so urgent and so explicit now. With esteem, I am, etc.

P.S. If it is convenient to you, the price of the redemptioners, and the cost of the Osnabrigs may go in payment; if it is not, I will send you the money. In last the son of Mr. Moody paid me £ .16

To PHILIP MARSTELLER

Mount Vernon, December 15, 1786.

Sir: To the severity of the weather, wch. has in a manner shut every thing up, and put a stop to all intercourse; and to some other circumstances unnecessary to mention, is to be ascribed my silence 'till now; and even now, when I recollect how fully I have already explained my ideas to you on what is intended to be the subject of this letter, I find that I have hardly anything to trouble you with by way of illucidation.

16. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

I will just observe, however, that having been well informed that seasons and circumstances *have occurred* and probably *will arrive again* , when goods by vendue have sold considerably below the Sterlg. cost of them; nay, that they have even been bought for the nominal sum currency, which they cost sterling in the countries from whence they were imported; and having found from experience, that I derive little or no advantage from the ready money payments I make for such articles as are requisite for the use of my Estate,

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(when I go to the Stores in Alexandria) I had determined to make the proposition to you which was pretty fully explained in the conversation I had with you at our last interview as has been already mentioned, and which in a word is as follows:

To allow you a Commission of 2½ pr Ct. (which you yourself declared was sufficient) upon all purchases you shall make for me at Vendue, of articles which may from time to time be enumerated to you. It is your interest, I know to sell high; it is mine to buy low; but there is nothing incompatible that I can conceive, in your agency in both these cases; for when the former is the case, I mean not to become a purchaser; when the latter happens, which no skill or exertion of your's can at all times prevent, is the moment of which I mean, thro' your attention to the business, to avail myself for supplies. To your knowledge of the goods which are intended for sale; the circumstances of the sale, and to your honor, of which I

entertain a very favourable opinion from the good report made of it by others, I entirely confide for the management. The payments shall always keep pace with the purchases; you have nothing more to do therefore than to give intimation of the latter by a line lodged at the post office, to receive the former: and were you now and then to add a concise list of the principal articles which are for sale, it would be obliging.

To particularize all the articles which are necessary for the use of a large family, would be as tedious as unnecessary. Every merchant who retails, and every man who provides for one, can be at no loss for them. The heavy articles, and such as at present occur to me are enumerated in the enclosed list: in which you will perceive no mention is made of coarse Woolens; because of these I manufacture a sufficiency to clothe my out-door negroes; nor have I said any thing of wines, because I import my own; but of the latter, if *good* Claret should at any time go cheap, I would take two or three Boxes. I have been obliged to buy about 200 ells of Ticklenburg for present use; perhaps the 2 or 300 more enumerated in the enclosed, may suffice; possibly more may be wanted. The Blankets will not be wanted before next autumn. Of Sugars my demand (as a private family) is great and constant; but of Coffee and Molasses, I have on hand a large stock.

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It is scarcely necessary to impress on you the idea that it is the prospect of very cheap buying which has induced me to adopt this mode of obtaining my supplies; and that unless the end is accomplished, my purposes will not be answered, nor my inclination gratified by it; but to prevent mistakes, I explicitly declare it. Few of the enumerated

articles am I in present want of; those for which I shall soonest have a call, are marked thus (*) in the margin; many of the others I may dispense with a year, or two years. They stand in the List as a memento only, in case very favorable moments present, for the purchase of them.

I am told it sometimes happens that Goods which come under the imputation of being damaged, tho' in fact they have received little or no real injury, are frequently sold uncommonly low indeed; particularly Bale blanketing, and other Bale goods. To embrace such opportunities is recommended, but in this, judgment and a close inspection are necessary; for it is not the lowest priced goods that are always the cheapest; the quality is, or ought to be as much an object with the purchaser, as the price.

I pray you to accept my thanks for the trouble you had with the German redemptioners which were purchased for me; the expence my Nephew the bearer of this, will pay. I am,
&c.17

17. A copy of the "Invoice of Goods wanted by George Washington" follows this letter in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*; but the copyist has neglected to mark any of the items therein as mentioned by an asterisk in the margin.

To JAMES MADISON

Mount Vernon, December 16, 1786.

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My dear Sir: Your favor of the 7th. came to hand the evening before last.¹⁸ The resolutions which you say are inserted in the Papers, I have not yet seen.¹⁹ The latter come irregularly, tho' I am a subscriber to Hay's Gazette.²⁰

Besides the reasons which are assigned in my circular letter to the several State Societies of the Cincinnati, for my nonattendance at the next General meeting to be holden at Philadelphia the first Monday of May, there existed one of a political nature, which operates more forceably on my mind than all the others; and which, in confidence, I will now communicate to you.

When this Society was first formed, I

18. "I am entirely convinced from what I observe here, that unless the project of Congs. [for ceding the Mississippi to Spain for 25 years] can be reversed, the hopes of carrying this State into a proper federal system will be demolished. Many of our most federal leading men are extremely soured with what has already passed. Mr. Henry, who has been hitherto the Champion of the federal cause, has become a cold advocate, and in the event of an actual sacrifice of the Missipi. by Congress, will unquestionably go over to the opposite side."— *Madison to Washington*, Dec. 7, 1786. A photostat of this letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

19. The resolutions of the Virginia House of Delegates on the memorial of the western members and some of the officers, on the Mississippi question.

20. James Hayes, jr.'s, *Virginia Gazette, or The American Advertiser*, of Richmond. Va.

am persuaded not a member of it conceived that it would give birth to those Jealousies, or be chargeable with those dangers (real or imaginary) with which the minds of many, and some of respectable characters, were filled. The motives which induced the Officers to enter into it were, I am confident, truly and frankly recited in the Institution: one of which, indeed the principal, was to establish a charitable fund for the relief of such of their

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compatriots, the Widows, and descendants of them, as were fit objects for their support; and for whom no public provision had been made. But the trumpet being sounded, the alarm was spreading far and wide; I readily perceived therefore that unless a modification of the plan could be effected (to annihilate the Society altogether was impracticable on acct. of the foreign officers who had been admitted), that irritations wd. arise which would soon draw a line betwn. the Society, and their fellow Citizens.

To prevent this. To conciliate the affections. And to convince the world of the purity of the plan, I exerted myself, and with much difficulty, effected the changes which appeared in the recommendation from the General Meeting to those of the States; the accomplishment of which was not easy; and I have since heard, that whilst some States acceded to the recommendation, others are not disposed thereto, alledging that, unreasonable prejudices, and ill founded jealousies ought not to influence a measure laudable in its institution, and salutary in its objects and operation.

Under these circumstances, there will be no difficulty in conceiving, that the part I should have had to have acted, would have been delicate. On the one hand, I might be charged with dereliction to the Officers, who had nobly supported me, and had treated me with

uncommon marks of attention and attachment. On the other, with supporting a measure incompatible (some say) with republican principles. I thought it best therefore without assigning this (the principal reason) to decline the Presidency, and to excuse my attendance at the meeting on the ground, which is firm and just; the necessity of paying attention to my private concerns; to conformity to my determination of passing the remainder of my days in a state of retirement; and to indisposition; occasioned by Rheumatic complaints with which, at times, I am a good deal afflicted. Professing at the sametime my entire approbation of tile institution as altered, and the pleasure I feel at the subsidence of those Jealousies which yielded to the change. *Presuming* , on the general adoption of them.

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I have been thus particular to shew, that under circumstances like these, I should feel myself in an awkward situation to be in Philadelphia on another public occasion during the sitting of this Society. That the prest. æera is pregnant of great, and *strange* events, none who will cast their eyes around them, can deny; what may be brought forth between this and the first of May to remove the difficulties which at present labour in my mind, against the acceptance of the honor which has lately been conferred on me by the Assembly, is not for me to predict; but I should think it incompatible with that candour which ought to characterize an honest mind, not to declare that under my present view of the matter, I should be too much embarassed by the meetings of these two bodies in the same

place, in the same moment (after what I have written) to be easy in the situation; and consequently, that it wd. be improper to let my appointment stand in the way of another.²¹ Of this, you who have had the whole matter fully before you, will judge; for having received no other than private intimation of my election, and unacquainted with the formalities which are, or ought to be used on these occasions, silence may be deceptive, or considered as disrespectful; The imputation of both, or either, I would wish to avoid. This is the cause of the present disclosure, immediately on the receipt of your letter, which has been locked up by Ice; for I have had no communication with Alexandria for many days, till the day before yesterday.

My Sentiments are decidedly against Commutables; for sure I am it will be found a tax without a revenue. That the people will be burthened. The public expectation deceived, and a few Speculators *only* , enriched. Thus the matter will end, after the morals of *some* , are more corrupted than they now are; and the minds of *all* , filled with more leaven, by finding themselves taxed, and the public demands in full force. Tobacco, on acct. of the public places of deposit, and from the accustomed mode of negotiating the article, is certainly better fitted for a Commutable than any other production of this Country; but if I understand the matter rightly (I have it from report only) will any man pay five pound in Specie for five taxables, when the same sum (supposing Tobo. not to exceed 20/. per ct.)

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will purchase 500 lbs. of Tobo. and this, if at 28/. will discharge the tax on Seven ? And will not the man who neither makes, nor can easily procure this commodity, complain of the inequality of such a mode, especially when he finds that the revenue is

21. Madison had stated in his letter of Dec. 7, 1786, that it was the opinion of many judicious friends that Washington's name could not be spared from the Virginia delegation to the convention to meet in Philadelphia in May.

diminished by the difference be it what it may, between the real and nominal price ? and that he is again to be taxed to make this good. These, and such like things, in my humble opinion, are extremely hurtful, and are among the principal causes that present depravity and corruption without accomplishing the object in view for it is not the shadow, but the substance with which Taxes must be paid, if we mean to be honest. With sentiments of sincere esteem etc.²²

To JOHN FRANCIS MERCER

Mount Vernon, December 19, 1786.

Sir: I received your favor of the 10th., last night. The letter I addressed to you about fourteen days ago, I was in hopes would have reached you before your reply to my former, would have been dispatched, and thereby have saved you the trouble of again touching on the subject of negroes.

I can have no idea of giving eighty or ninety pounds a head for slaves when I am well informed that for ready money the best common labouring negroes in this State, may be bought for less than sixty, and others in proportion. For this species of property I have no predilection nor any urgent call, being already over stocked with some kind of it; consequently

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22. From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, of New York City.

can have no inducement to give 50 pr. Ct. more than the like property is offered for and doth actually sell at. A payment in negroes, if this was to take place, can be considered in no other light by either of us, than as ready money; it stops the payment of it, and is I presume a convenience. But to supercede the necessity of enforcing these observations, and to remove every suspicion which might have arisen in your mind, of a desire in me to beat you down in the price of your slaves, was the cause of my last address to you.

As the design however has not been accomplished; and it is necessary both for your information, and for my satisfaction and government that something decisive should be resolved on, I will, in one word, fix my ultimatum with respect to the negroes proposed for sale. Which is to allow you three hundred pounds for young Bob (or another fellow of his age and appearance), Tom the baker. Nessey, David, James and Valentine; but this I do on the proviso that they answer your description in their ages, sizes and qualities; for unless the two last named boys are of sufficient size to be put to trades, they would not answer my purpose; because the persons with whom I should place them are Servants in this family whose terms will expire in less than three years. In making you this offer I have exceeded by at least 25 pr. Ct. the ready money prices which have been reported to me. That you may have given more I by no means question, but possibly your purchases were on credit, or probably the prices have since fallen. My information of the present selling prices is from very well informed characters.

With respect to the corn, it is perfectly agreeable to me, that you should sell it to any person you please, and instead of ten,

I wish you may be able to get fifteen shillings pr. barrl. for it. But as Mr. Petit is a gentleman with whom I have no acquaintance, I shall not look to him for the purchase money; I do not wish however to deprive you of the price he offers, by making it a ready

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money sale to him, altho' it would have been so to me. I am also perfectly willing to allow whatever is due on my Bond (with interest thereon) which passed to Messrs. Blair and McCoul, provided that Bond is got in; but you would not I am persuaded request me to allow this sum on one accot., and be exposed to the claim of it from another quarter.

When I agreed to take two thousand pounds of Certificates, it was my intention, and still is that it shall comprehend every [thing] which relates to this species of property. And you may be assured, Sir, that in whatever light this matter from first to last may have appeared to you, I distress myself exceedingly by these accommodations; because nothing but the money, and that in a lump, would have answered any valuable purposes of mine, for by receiving this debt in driblets, I am actually sinking one sum, without discharging those debts of my own which press upon me and which are accumulating by a heavier interest than I receive. I do not mean however to go over this ground again. I am willing to abide by the propositions now made, and wish to be explicitly resolved on them, because if they are acceded to, I shall endeavour to raise money by the sale of some part of my property, for the purposes alluded to, and do not expect

I shall have less difficulty, or sustain less loss in the accomplishment of it than others. I will enquire of Mr. Lund Washington about the Bond you speak of, and am, etc.²³

To GOVERNOR EDMUND RANDOLPH

Mount Vernon, December 21, 1786.

Sir: I had not the honor of receiving your Excellency's favor of the 6th, with its enclosures,²⁵ till last night. Sensible as I am of the honor conferred on me by the General Assembly, in appointing me one of the Deputies²⁶ to a Convention proposed to be held in the City of Philadelphia in May next, for the purpose of revising the Fœderal Constitution; and desirous as I am on all occasions, of testifying a ready obedience to the calls of my Country; yet, Sir, there exists at this moment, circumstances, which I am persuaded will render my acceptance of this fresh mark of confidence incompatible with other measures

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which I had previously adopted; and from which, seeing little prospect of disengaging myself, it would be disengenuous not to express a wish that some other character, on whom greater reliance can be had, may be substituted in my place; the probability of my non-attendance being too great to continue my appointment.

As no mind can be more deeply impressed than mine is with the awful situation of our affairs; resulting in a great measure from the want of efficient powers

23. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

25. Sparks prints the following extract from Randolph's reply to Washington's letter, but the letter itself (Jan. 4, 1787) is not now found in the *Washington Papers*: "Although compelled, by duty to lay before the Council your answer to my notification of your appointment to Philadelphia, I was happy to find them concurring with me in the propriety of entreating you not to decide on a refusal immediately. Perhaps the obstacles now in view may be removed before May; and the nomination of a successor, if necessary at all, will be as effectually made some time hence as now. perhaps too (and indeed I fear the event) every other consideration may seem of little weight, when compared with the crisis, which may then hang over the United States. I hope, therefore, that you will excuse me for holding up your letter for the present, and waiting until time shall discover the result of the commotions now prevailing."

26. The other deputies were Patrick Henry, Edmund Randolph, John Blair, James Madison, George Mason, and George Wythe. Henry did not attend and James M'Clurg was appointed in his place.

On December 23 Washington wrote briefly to De la Dalle, that his "letter, Plan and Estimate for establishing a manufacture of cotton &ca." had been sent to the Governor to be laid before the assembly, "if he shall think proper." A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

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in the foederal head, and due respect to its Ordinances, so, consequently, those who do engage in the important business of removing these defects, will carry with them every good wish of mine which the best dispositions towards the attainment can bestow. I have the honr. etc.

[H.S.P.]

***To GOVERNOR EDMUND RANDOLPH**

Mount Vernon, December 25, 1786.

Sir: To promote industry and œconomy, and to encourage manufactures, is certainly consistent with that sound policy which ought to actuate every State. There are times too, which call loudly for the exercise of these virtues; and the present, in my humble opinion, may be accounted a fit one for the adoption of them in this Commonwealth.

How far the proposition which I have the honor to enclose merits Legislative encouragement, your Excellency will determine. As it came to me, you will receive it. The writer is unknown to me; of him, or his plan, I had not the smallest intimation till the papers were handed to me from the Post Office. The document in the hand writing of Mr. Jefferson (with which it is accompanied) entitles the latter to consideration, but as an individual it is not convenient for me to afford Mr. de la Vallee the aids he requires, or to have him upon my hands till he can be properly established; nor indeed is Alexandria, in my opinion, so proper a situation as a more southern one for the Manufacture of Cotton. However, if your Excellency should think his plan not worthy of public attention, or judgg. otherwise, it should not find encouragement from the Assembly, I would thank you for returning the letter and papers to me, that I may give Mr. de la Vallee an answer as soon as possible; his circumstances seeming to require one. With sentiments of grt. esteem etc.

[H.S.P.]

To DAVID HUMPHREYS

Mount Vernon, December 26, 1786.

Mr Dr. Humphreys: I am much indebted to you for your several favors of the 1st. 9th. and 16th. of Novr. the last came first. Mr. Morse, having in mind the old proverb, was determined not to make more haste than good speed in prosecuting his journey to Georgia, so I got the two first lately.

For your publication respecting the treatment of Captn. Asgill,²⁹ I am exceedingly obliged to you. The manner of making it is the best that cou'd be devised; whilst the matter will prove the illiberality, as well as the fallacy of the reports which have been circulated on that occasion, and which are fathered upon that officer as the author.

It is with the deepest and most heartfelt concern, I perceive by some late paragraphs extracted from the Boston papers, that the Insurgents of Massachusetts, far from being satisfied with the redress offered by their general Court, are still acting in open violation of law and government, and have obliged the chief Magistrate in a decided tone to call upon the Militia of the State to support the Constitution. What, gracious God, is man! that there should be such inconsistency and perfidiousness in his conduct? It is but the other day, that we were shedding our blood to obtain the Constitutions under which we now live; Constitutions of our own choice and making; and now we are unsheathing the sword to overturn them. The thing is so unaccountable, that I hardly know how to realize

29. Humphreys's publication of the Asgill case was printed in the *Columbia Magazine*, January and February, 1787, pp. 205–9, 233–35. It was reprinted by The Holland Club, New York, in 1859.

it, or to persuade myself that I am not under the illusion of a dream.

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My mind, previous to the receipt of your letter of the 1st. ulto., had often been agitated by a thought similar to the one you have expressed respecting an old friend³⁰ of your's; but Heaven forbid that a crisis should come when he shall be driven to the necessity of making choice of either of the alternatives there mentioned.³¹ Let me entreat you, my dr. Sir, to keep me advised of the situation of affairs in your quarter. I can depend upon your accounts. Newspaper paragraphs unsupported by other testimony, are often contradictory and bewildering. At one time these insurgents are spoken of as a mere mob; at other times as systematic in all their proceedings. If the first, I would fain hope that like other Mobs it will, however formidable, be of short duration. If the latter there are surely men of consequence and abilities behind the curtain who move the puppets; the designs of whom may be deep and dangerous. They may be instigated by British counsel; actuated by ambitious motives, or being influenced by dishonest principles, had rather see the Country in the horror of civil discord, than do what justice would dictate to an honest mind.

I had scarcely despatched my circular letters to the several State Societies of the Cincinnati, when I received letters from some of the principal members of our Assembly expressing a wish that they might be permitted to name me as one of the Deputies of this State to the Convention proposed to be held at Philadelphia the first of May next. I immediately wrote to my particular friend Mr. Madison (and gave similar reasons to the others) the answer is contained in the extract No. 1; in reply I got the extract No. 2. This obliged me to be more explicit and confidential with him

30. Washington.

31. Humphreys had written (Nov. 1, 1786): "In case of civil discord, I have already told you, it was seriously my opinion, that you could not remain neuter, and that you would be obliged in self defense to take part on one side or the other: or withdraw from the Continent. Your friends are of the same opinion; and I believe you are convinced, it is

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impossible to have more disinterested and zealous friends than those who have been about your person.” Humphreys's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

on points which a recurrence to the conversations we have had on this subject will bring to your mind and save me the hazard of a recital in this letter. Since this interchange of letters I have received from the Governor the letter No. 4 and have written No. 5 in answer to it. Should this matter be further pressed, (which I hope it will not, as I have no inclination to go) what had I best do? You as an indifferent person, and one who is much better acquainted with the sentiments and views of the Cincinnati than I am; (for in this State where the recommendations of the General Meeting have been agreed to hardly any thing is said about it) as also with the temper of the people and state of politics at large, can determine upon better ground and fuller evidence than myself; especially as you have opportunities of knowing in what light the States to the Eastward consider the Convention, and the measures they are pursuing to contravene, or to give efficiency to it.

On the last occasion,³² only five States were represented; none East of New York. Why the New England Governments did not appear, I am yet to learn; for of all others the distractions and turbulent temper of these people would, I should have thought, have afforded the strongest evidence of the *necessity* of competent powers somewhere. That the Fœderal Government is nearly, if not quite at a stand, none will deny. The first question then is, shall it be annihilated or supported? If the latter, the proposed convention is an object of the first magnitude, and should be supported by all the friends of the present

32. The Annapolis Convention.

Constitution. In the other case, if on a full and dispassionate revision thereof, the continuance shall be adjudged impracticable or unwise, as only delaying an event which must 'ere long take place; would it not be better for such a Meeting to suggest some other, to avoid if possible civil discord or other impending evils? I must candidly confess,

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as we could not remain quiet more than three or four years in time of peace, under the Constitutions of our own choosing; which it was believed, in many States at least, were formed with deliberation and wisdom, I see little prospect either of our agreeing upon any other, or that we should remain long satisfied under it if we could. Yet I would wish any thing, and every thing essayed to prevent the effusion of blood, and to avert the humiliating and contemptible figure we are about to make in the annals of mankind.

If this second attempt to convene the States for the purposes proposed by the report of the partial representation at Annapolis in September, should also prove abortive, it may be considered as an unequivocal evidence that the States are not likely to agree on any general measure which is to pervade the Union, and of course that there is an end of Fœderal Government. The States therefore which make the last dying essay to avoid these misfortunes, would be mortified at the issue, and their deputies would return home chagrined at their ill success and disappointment. This would be a disagreeable circumstance for any one of them to be in, but more particularly so for a person in my situation. If no further application is made to me, of course I do not attend; if there is, I am under no obligation to do it, but as I have had so many proofs of your friendship, know your abilities to judge,

and your opportunities of learning the politics of the day, on the points I have enumerated, you would oblige me by a full and confidential communication of your sentiments thereon.

Peace and tranquillity prevail in this State. the Assembly by a very great majority, and in very emphatical terms, have rejected an application for paper money, and spurned the idea of fixing the value of military Certificates by a scale of depreciation. In some other respects too the proceedings of the present Session have been marked with justice and a strong desire of supporting the fœderal system. Altho' I lament the effect, I am pleased at the cause which has deprived us of the pleasure of your aid in the attack of Christmas pies: we had one yesterday on which all the company, tho' pretty numerous, were hardly able to make an impression. Mrs. Washington and George and his wife (Mr. Lear I had

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occasion to send to the Western Country) join in affectione. regards for you, and with sentiments, &c.33

33. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To HENRY KNOX**

Mount Vernon, December 26, 1786.

My dear Sir: Nothing but the pleasing hope of seeing you under this roof in the course of last month, and wch. I was disposed to extend even to the present moment, has kept me till this time from acknowledging the receipt of your obliging favor of the 23d of October. Despairing now of that pleasure, I shall thank you for the above letter, and the subsequent one of the 17th. instr., which came to hand yesterday evening.

Lamentable as the conduct of the Insurgents of Massachusetts is, I am exceedingly obliged to you for the advices respecting them; and pray you, most ardently, to continue the acct. of their proceedings; because I can depend upon them from you without having my mind bewildered with those vague and contradictory reports which are handed to us in Newspapers, and which please one hour, only to make the moments of the next more bitter. I feel, my dear Genl. Knox, infinitely more than I can express to you, for the disorders which have arisen in these States. Good God! who besides a tory could have foreseen, or a Briton predicted them! were these people wiser than others, or did they judge of us from the corruption, and depravity of their own hearts? The latter I am persuaded was the case, and that notwithstanding the boasted virtue of America, we are far gone in every thing ignoble and bad.

I do assure you, that even at this moment, when I reflect on the present posture of our affairs, it seems to me to be like the vision of a dream. My mind does not know how to realize it, as a thing in actual existence, so strange, so wonderful does it appear

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to me! In this, as in most other matter, we are too slow. When this spirit first dawned, probably it might easily have been checked; but it is scarcely within the reach of human ken, at this moment, to say when, where, or how it will end. There are combustibles in every State, which a spark might set fire to. In this State, a perfect calm prevails at present, and a prompt disposition to support, and give energy to the fœderal System is discovered, if the unlucky stirring of the dispute respecting the navigation of the Mississippi does not become a leaven that will ferment, and sour the mind of it.

The resolutions of the prest. Session respecting a paper emission, military certificates, &ca., have stamped justice and liberality on the proceedings of the Assembly, and By a late act, *it* seems very desirous of a General Convention to revise and amend the fœderal Constitution. Apropos, what prevented the Eastern States from attending the September meeting at Annapolis? Of all the States in the Union it should have seemed to me, that a measure of this sort (distracted as they were with internal commotions, and experiencing the want of energy in the government) would have been most pleasing to them. What are the prevailing sentiments of the one now proposed to be held at Philadelphia, in May next? and how will it be attended ? You are at the fountain of intelligence, and where the wisdom of the Nation, it is to be presumed, has concentered; consequently better able (as I have had abundant experience of your intelligence, confidence, and candour to solve these questions.

The Maryland Assembly has been violently agitated by the question for a paper emission. It has been carried in the House of Delegates, but what has, or will be done with the Bill in the Senate I have not yet heard. The partisans in favor of the measure in the lower House, threaten, it is said, a secession if it is rejected by that Branch of the Legislature. Thus are we advancing. In regretting, which I have often done with the deepest sorrow, the death of our much lamented frd. General Greene, I have accompanied it of late with a quære, whether he would not have preferred such an exit to the scenes which it is more than probable many of his compatriots may live to bemoan.

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In both your letters you intimate, that the men of reflection, principle and property in New England, feeling the inefficacy of their present government, are contemplating a change; but you are not explicit with respect to the nature of it. It has been supposed, that, the Constitution of the State of Massachusetts was amongst the most energetic in the Union; May not these disorders then be ascribed to an indulgent exercise of the powers of Administration? If your laws authorized, and your powers were adequate to the suppression of these tumults, in the first appearances of them, delay and temporizing expedients were, in my opinion improper; these are rarely well applied, and the same causes would produce similar effects in any form of government, if the powers of it are not enforced. I ask this question for information, I know nothing of the facts.

That G. B will be an unconcerned Spectator of the present insurrections (if they continue) is not to be expected. That she is at this moment sowing the Seeds of jealousy and discontent among the various

tribes of Indians on our frontier admits of no doubt, in my mind. And that she will improve every opportunity to foment the spirit of turbulence within the bowels of the United States, with a view of distracting our governments, and promoting divisions, is, with me, not less certain. Her first Manœuvres will, no doubt, be covert, and may remain so till the period shall arrive when a decided line of conduct may avail her. Charges of violating the treaty, and other pretexts, will not then be wanting to colour overt acts, tending to effect the grt. objects of which she has long been in labour. A Man is now at the head of their American Affairs²⁷ well calculated to conduct measures of this kind, and more than probably was selected for the purpose. We ought not therefore to sleep nor to slumber. Vigilance in watching, and vigour in acting, is, in my opinion, become indispensably necessary. If the powers are inadequate amend or alter them, but do not let us sink into the lowest state of humiliation and contempt, and become a byword in all the earth. I think with you that the Spring will unfold important and distressing Scenes, unless much wisdom and good

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management is displayed in the interim. Adieu; be assured no man has a higher esteem and regard for you than I have; none more sincerely your friend, and more Affecte. etc.

27. Foreign Secretary Francis Osborne, Fifth Duke of Leeds.

P. S. Mrs. Washington joins me in every good wish for you and Mrs. Knox, and in congratulatory Compts. on the late addition to your family. Will you be so obliging as to give the enclosed a safe conveyance. I have recd. one or two very obliging letters from Genl. Tupper²⁸ whilst he was in the Western Country and wish to thank him for them; but know not in what part of Massachusetts he lives.

[MS.H.S.]

To THOMAS JOHNSON

Mount Vernon, December 28, 1786.

Dr. Sir: It gave me pleasure to find by your letter of the 7th. that the petition of the Directors of the Potomac Company had met so ready and favorable a reception in the Assembly of Maryland. I am informed that an act similar to the one you sent me has passed the Legislature of this State, but I have received no official advice of it.

Permit me, my good Sir, to ask if there would be a probability of your Assembly's (if the matter should be laid before it) doing anything to good effect in the case stated in the enclosed letter from Mr. Wilson to me. I am one of the Executors, indeed the only surviving one, of Colo. Thomas Colvill; and am exceedingly anxious to have the administration of that Estate closed. I know nothing of the facts mentioned in Mr. Wilson's letter respecting the confiscations, sales, and the motives which led to them, in the instance alluded to, but would be thankful for your opinion and advice thereon.

Mr. Brindley³⁴ promised me by letter in Octor. that he would call upon me in his way to So. Carolina, but I have not seen or heard from him since the date of his letter We ought

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undoubtedly to avail ourselves of all the aids we can derive from experimental knowledge in our reach. I concur readily therefore in sentiment with you and Mr. Lee

28. Benjamin Tupper.

34. James Brindley, son or nephew of the builder of the Bridgewater Canal.

that it would be proper to see what lights Mr. Brindley can afford us in conducting the navigation thro' the little Falls, and the idea of a model for the Locks at the great Falls, I think good for the reasons you offer, the expence will be trifling and the saving may be great.

The lesson you seem fearful of learning will most assuredly be taught us. The strides we have already taken, and are now making, to corruption are inconceivably great; and I shall be exceedingly, but very agreeably disappointed if next Spring does not display scenes which will astonish the world. Nothing, I am certain, but the wisest councils and the most vigorous exertions can avert them.

With sentiments of very great esteem etc.³⁵

To GEORGE DIGGES

Mount Vernon, December 28, 1786.

Dr. Sir: Will you allow me to give you the trouble of enquiring among your friends of the Eastern shore, now at Annapolis, if I could be furnished with one thousand feet of the best pine plank, precisely 24 feet long when dressed, to be without knots or sap. It is for the floor of my new room. Many years ago I provided for this,

35. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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and thought myself secure of that which was perfectly seasoned. It had been dressed and laid by; but when I was about to make use of it, behold! two thirds of it was stolen, and the other # will match no plank I can now get.

I do not expect to get seasoned plank of this description; but on whom I cou'd depend for the length and quality, I would wish to know, for if I cannot be supplied with certainty, I shall immediately write to Norfolk. I would thank you for an answer by the Post. I am, etc.³⁶

To THEODORICK BLAND

Mount Vernon, December 28, 1786.

Dr. Sir: I am now about to fulfill my promise with respect to the Drill plough and Timothy seed; both accompany this letter to Norfolk, to the care of Mr. Newton. The latter I persume is good, as I had it from a Gentleman (Colo. Levin Powell) on whom I can depend. The former, it is scarcely necessary to inform you, will not work to good effect in Land that is very full either of stumps, stones or large clods; but where the ground is tolerable free from these and in good tilth, and particularly in light land, I am certain you will find it equal to your most sanguine expectation for Indian Corn, wheat, Barley, Pease or any other tolerably round grain that you may wish to sow, or plant in this manner. I have sowed Oats very well with it, which is among

36. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

the most inconvenient and unfit grains for this machine.

To give you a just idea of the use and management of it, I must observe, that the barrel at present has only one set of holes, and those adapted for the planting of Indian Corn only eight inches apart in the row: but by corking these, the same barrel may receive others of a size fitted for any other grain. To make the holes, observe this rule, begin small and

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encrease the size 'till they emit the number of grains, or thereabouts, you would chuse to deposit in a place. They should be burnt, done by a gage, (that all may be of a size) and made widest on the out side to prevent the seeds choking them. You may, in a degree, emit more or less through the same holes, by encreasing or lessening the quantity of seed in the barrel. The less there is in it, the faster it issues. The compressure is encreased by the quantity and the discharge is retarded thereby. The use of the band is to prevent the seeds issuing out of more holes than one at a time. It may be slackened or braced according to the influence the atmosphere has on the leather: the tighter it is, provided the wheels revolve easily, the better. By decreasing or multiplying the holes in the barrel, you may plant at any distance you please. The circumference of the wheels being six feet or 72 inches, divide the latter by the number of inches you intend your plants shall be asunder, and it gives the number of holes required in the barrel.

The sparse situation of the teeth in the harrow, is designed that

the ground may be raked without the harrow being clogged, if the ground should be clody or grassy. The string, when this happens is to be the case, will raise and clear it with great ease, and is of service in turning at the ends of rows; at which time the wheels, by means of the handles, are raised off the ground as well as the harrow to prevent the waste of seed. A small bag, containing about a peck of the seed you are sowing, is hung to the nails on the right handle, and with a small tin cup the barrel is replenished with convenience whenever it is necessary without loss of time, or waiting to come up with the seed bag at the end of the row. I had almost forgot to tell you, that if the hole in the leather band (thro' which the seed is to pass when it comes in contact with the hole in the barrel) should incline to gape, or the lips of it turn out, so as to admit the seed between the band and barrel, it is easily, [sic] and must be remedied by rivitting a piece of sheet tin, copper, or brass the width of the band, and about four inches long with a hole through it the size of the one in the leather, I found this effectual. Mrs. Washington joins me in presenting the compliments of the season to Mrs. Bland and yourself, and with great esteem, etc.³⁷

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37. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN ARMISTEAD

Mount Vernon, December 29, 1786.

Sir: Many months having elapsed since I informed you in explicit terms of my want of the money which is due to me from the Estate of your deceased Father, without having received any acknowledgment of the letter, I presume it has miscarried. To avoid the like accident, I have taken the liberty of putting this letter under cover to Mr. Holmes, at the Bowling-green, who I persuade myself, will do me the favor of seeing that it gets safe to your hands.

It will serve to assure you, Sir, that I was disposed to hope, considering the long standing and nature of the debt, that you would not have laid me under the necessity of so often reminding you of it, and at length to inform you that however disagreeable it will be to me, I must have recourse to a Court of Justice if the money is not paid me without more delay; for you may believe me when I assure you I am really in want of it. I am, etc.³⁷

37. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To GEORGE WEEDON

Mount Vernon, December 29, 1786.

Dear Sir: I have been favored with your official letter of the ulto. in answer to my circular one of the 31st. October; but will you permit me, in a private and friendly manner, to ask if my letter or a copy of it has been sent to the Vice President, General Gates? You would have perceived that that letter was intended to have met him in the double capacity of President of the State Society, and Vice President of the Genl. Meeting. In the former case, as he did not attend the State Meeting in Richmond, it was unnecessary

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that he should be furnished with a copy of it; but as Vice President he ought to be made acquainted with my intention of not attending the latter, the reason therefore of this enquiry is, that if it has not been [done] by the State Society, I may do it from hence.

I should be glad to know the names of the Delegates from this State to the general Meeting to be held in May next at Philada.

I shall be ready at all times between this and the appointment of my Successor,³⁸ to sign any Diplomas which may be presented to me; but it will readily occur to you that after this event takes place my powers wou'd cease, and the signature would be invalid. With great esteem, etc.³⁹

38. Washington was president of the Society of the Cincinnati until he died.

39. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To WILLIAM HULL

Mount Vernon, December 29, 1786.

Dear Sir: I informed you in my last, that my own knowledge of the Western Country was rather general than otherwise, but promised to lose no opportunity of collecting every information which I thought might facilitate your intended settlement. Since which time I have had occasion to send Mr. Lear out as far as Pittsburg to transact some business for me in that quarter; I directed him to make such enquiries and to gain such information respecting the points touched upon in your letter as would enable me to answer it with more precision than my own knowledge would permit me to do. He has just returned, and I take the earliest opportunity of conveying to you such information as I hope will be satisfactory.

Cattle of every kind may be purchased in the neighbourhood of Pittsburg very reasonably and in any numbers. Iron castings, bar iron &c. may be bought there, and perhaps cheaper

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than they can be carried out by families that are removing. The prices of the following articles at and near Pittsburgh, will enable you to determine whether it would be best to carry them out or purchase them there.

Cows (The Cows are not so large nor so good as those in Nw. England) £4 d £4:10.
Pennsa: Cury.; Sheep 16/; Hogs 18/ Cwt; Beeves 25/ Cwt; Corn 2/6 d 2/8 pr. bushl; Wheat 3/6. d 4 Do; Flour 15/ Cwt;

Salt 20/ and 25/ pr. bushl; Iron Castings 1/ pr lb; Bar iron 8d do; Wrought do 2/ do;
Whiskey 3/ pr. gallon; Dry goods 40 pr. Ct. from their cost at Philada.

There is no furnace in the western Country, the nearest to those parts is on the Potomac, sixty miles below Fort Cumberland. Salt may be purchased at Kentucky cheaper than at Pittsburgh, as they have salt Springs in that Country from which they can supply themselves with that article.

You desired my advice respecting the best mode of effecting your plan; but as you did not point out to me the part of the Country where the settlement is intended to be made; I can only give you my opinion as to the best plan of getting over the Alleghany mountains to the Western waters.

I should think it would be well (if the Settlers intend going out in large bodies) to send some person into that Country to make proper arrangements previous to their going; such as to procure Cattle and provisions, provide boats to go down the River &c. The families could come to Alexandria by water: from thence to Fort Cumberland which is 150 miles there is a good waggon road. From the latter place it would be best to pursue Braddocks road (which is well settled and has good accomodations upon it) to Red Stone 75 miles from Cumberland, where boats are built for the purpose of going down the Ohio, and which is the general rendezvous for people going into the Western Country. These Boats are flat, very large and capable of carrying forty or fifty Tons: they cost from twenty to thirty

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pounds Pennsylvania currency, according to their size. They generally stop at Pittsburgh in their way

down, to procure any Articles they may have occasion for: or boats may be procured at that place which is 50 miles from Red Stone old Fort, and the people can embark there. I am, etc.⁴⁰

To PIERRE CHARLES L'ENFANT

Mount Vernon, January 1, 1787.

Sir: The Letter which you did me the honor of writing to me the 6th. ulto. together with the Memorial which accompanied it⁴¹ came safe, after some delay.

Without entering into the merits of the latter, which I could only do as an individual, I shall regret that your zeal for the honor, and your wishes to advance what you conceived to be the interests of the Society of the Cincinnati, should have led you into difficulties which are attended with such embarrassing circumstances, and from which none but the general Meeting (to be held at Philada. in May next) can afford you relief. It shall be my care to hand the Memorial to that body for consideration.

In the meantime, if my resources were adequate, it would afford me much pleasure to advance the sum for which you are engaged;

40. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

41. In the Society of the Cincinnati Deposit in the Library of Congress.

but altho' there is no legal obligation upon me to disclose the state of my own finances, and in prudence it might perhaps be better to avoid it; yet Sir, as a testimony of my disposition to serve you if I had the means, I will assure you that what with the losses I sustained during the war, in having, almost without exception the monies which were due

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to me paid in at a depreciated value, (some at less than 6d. in the pound), my own Debts now to pay at their intrinsic value, with interest thereon, and other circumstances which are unnecessary to enumerate, I find it exceedingly difficult, without the weight of extraneous matters, to make my funds and expenditures accord with each other.

I can only repeat to you the pleasure I should have had, and shall have in seeing you at this seat of my retirement, if circumstances had permitted, or would permit you to visit it, and the assurances of esteem with which, I am, etc.

P. S. Not knowing that the picture mentioned in the postscript to your letter had been sent to this Country; I wrote to the Gentn. who did me the honor of offering it (as soon as I received his letter) declining the acceptance, under conviction that it would not have justice done it in any situation I could place it in my house. Since it is arrived I am at a loss what further to say on the subject, as my letter has long since been dispatched, and if I recollect rightly was addressed to your care. Perhaps it would be best now to await a reply.⁴²

42. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To SEDDON & COMPANY⁴⁷

Mount Vernon, January 9, 1787.

Gentn: I have received the 10th. of your letter of Decemr. together with the several numbers of the Columbian Magazine. I thank you for your attention to me in sending the several numbers which have been published, and wish you to consider me a subscriber; as I conceive a publication of that kind may be the means of conveying much useful knowledge to the community which might otherwise be lost, and when it is properly conducted, it should, in my opinion be properly encouraged. I am, etc.⁴⁸

To CHARLES WILLSON PEALE

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Mount Vernon, January 9, 1787.

Sir: Your letter of the 31st. of Decemr. came duly to hand. I cannot say that I shall be happy to have it in my power to comply with your request by sending you the bodies of my Pheasants; but I am afraid it will not be long before they will compose a part of your Museum, as they all appear to be drooping. One of the Silver Pheasants died sometime before the receipt of your letter, and its body was thrown away, but whenever any of the others make their exit they shall be sent to you agreeably to your request. I am etc.⁴⁶

47. Consisted of T. Seddon, W. Spotswood, C. Cist, J. Trenchard, and others, in Philadelphia, Pa.

48. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

46. In the writing of Tobias Lear. From a photostat of the original kindly furnished by Judge E. A. Armstrong, of Princeton, N. J.

To DOCTOR JOHN LEIGH

Mount Vernon, January 9, 1787.

Sir: I received your letter of the 30th. of October, together with your Dissertation on opium. You will please Sir, to accept my thanks for the honor which you did me in the dedication of your work. Altho' I am not desirous of compliments of this kind, and have put off several applications which have been made to dedicate literary productions to me, yet I should always wish to encourage every useful and beneficial performance as much as is in my power. I am, etc.⁴³

***To DANIEL CARROLL**

Mount Vernon, January 9, 1787.

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Sir: [Your letter of the 26th. Ult. did not reach me till within these 3 days, or it should have received an earlier acknowledgment.

The land I advertised for Sale in Fayette County containing 1650 acres or thereabouts, by the Patents, may, as a tract, be considered as equal to any in the County, or Country; but as it is my wish that the purchaser should examine it, I will say no more than that there is an appearance of a rich Iron Ore at the door of the Mill, which is now much out of repair.

43. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

Small tracts of land in the vicinity of this, of the same quality have sold for three pounds and upwards Pensa. Curry. an Acre. But if one person will take the whole of mine, I would let it go for Forty shillings that money an Acre (payable in Specie) one fourth down, the other three fourths in annual payments, with interest from] the date of the Bonds; perhaps a longer time might be allowed.⁴⁹

To BUSHROD WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, January 10, 1787.

My Dear Bushrod: I condole most sincerely with you, my Sister and family, on the death of my Brother.⁵⁰ I feel most sensibly for this event; but resignation being our duty, to attempt an expression of my sorrow on this occasion would be as feebly described, as it would be unavailing when related.

If there are any occasional services which I can render my Sister⁵¹

49. From a facsimile in a sales catalogue, 1920. The portion in brackets is from the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

50. John Augustine Washington.

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51. Hannah Bushrod Washington.

or any of you, I shall have great pleasure in the execution. If I could discharge the duties of an Executor, I would undertake the trust most chearfully; but in truth I am not in a situation to do this. Already I am so much involved in, and so perplexed with other peoples affairs, that my own are very much unattended to. Happily, there is not the least occasion of my assistance in the administration of your deceased Father's Estate. Your competency *alone* is sufficient for this purpose, when joined by that of my Sister and your brother, the task will be easy. It may be an alleviating circumstance of my brother's death, that his affairs fall into such good hands, and that each of you have dispositions and capability to do what is proper.

I hope this letter will find my Sister in a better situation than when your's left her. Every good wish of this family is offered for it, and the sincerest regard for you all. With unfeigned Affection I am, etc.

P.S. Mr. Lear is returned from the Western Country. In consequence of my request to Majr. Freeman, to advance Mr. Smith's fees for the Suit depending on accot. of your Lands in Fayette Coty., he had sent me the enclosed, which I forward that you may know how that matter stands.⁵²

52. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CHARLES CARTER

Mount Vernon, January 10, 1787.

Dear Sir: I should have presented you with an earlier acknowledgement of your favor of the 4th. ulto., but expecting to meet the Directors of the Potomac Company, I delayed writing 'till it was over, that I might give you the trouble of receiving one letter *only* , in answer to the several parts of it.

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Having laid before the Directors that part of your letter which respects the opinions of Mr. Yates and Captn. Harris on inland navigations unincumbered with Locks, I am authorized to say that any information on this head from Captain Harris, containing the principles of the substitutes for Locks, by which so considerable a saving as you speak of can be made, would be most thankfully received; and if upon the investigation or practice on them, they shall be found of such œconomy and utility as is mentioned, the Board would cheerfully give a further proof of their sense of the obligation they would feel themselves under for such important advice.

When you shall have received Mr. Yates's observations on the comparison of the Orchard and New River grasses, I shall be obliged to you for a transcript of them, as I am persuaded they have been made with attention, accuracy and judgment. I have never seen, nor do I remember ever to have read or heard of any grass, denominated Egyptian grass. Whence comes it?

From the Country of that name? If so, may it not in fact be our Blue grass, not yet perfectly assimilated by the Climate and soil of this meridian?

I am much obliged by the offer of your farm for the accommodation of my lately arrived Jack Ass; (which I think an exceeding fine one) but as he is too young to cover, being only two years old, and females came along with him, the same attendance does for all of them. And besides as they seem (if I was to form an opinion of the two Jacks from present appearances) to be designed for as different purposes as a Courser and Dray, there will be no propriety in separating them hereafter. The one will suit the strong heavy draft, and the other the light and active one for the road.

I pray you to offer my best respects to Mrs. Carter, in which Mrs. Washington unites. I am, etc.⁵³

53. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To PRICE POSEY

Mount Vernon, January 12, 1787.

Sir: It will not be difficult for you to conceive my surprise when I inform you that after waiting near three years since my return home in expectation that an account would be rendered me of the management of my Estate below; and calling, with some degree of astonishment, on Mr. Hill for this neglect, to find by his answer lately received, that the accounts had been settled years ago with you, and not only the produce of that Estate paid into your hands, but that other considerable sums of money which he had collected for me from Mr. Newton of Norfolk, for Flour, Fish &c. sent him from my Estate in this County to dispose of on commission had gone this way also.

If it had been inconvenient for you to have delivered me my money, would it not have been right to have given me the accot. and to have informed me of the circumstances which had occasioned the detention of it? Strange and unaccountable as this conduct is, I shall for the present (as I am entirely in the dark with respect to this business) content myself with requesting that the accounts and papers which were put into your hands for my use by Mr. Hill, may be returned either to him or me, with a statement of any transactions of your own on my account, previously or subsequent thereto, that I may know how to come to a final settlement with Mr. Hill.

This request, I expect will

meet no denial or delay: reason, Justice and every other consideration call upon you for a compliance therewith. I am, etc.⁵⁴

To JAMES HILL

Mount Vernon, January 12, 1787.

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Sir: Your Letter of the 24th. of September in answer to mine of the 20th. of August was a long time in getting to my hands, and very unsatisfactory when it arrived. If you were ever directed by me to settle your accounts with, and pay the produce of my Estate under your management into the hands of Mr. Posey, I should be glad to receive a copy of the order. My memory, nor any paper in my possession does not furnish me with the least trace of my having ever given such an order; yet I will not say the fact is otherwise, because the busy scenes in which I was engaged during my continuance in public life, and the multiplicity of things

54. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

which were constantly pressing on my mind in those days, may have driven the remembrance of it from me. It is for this reason I ask for a copy of the authority under which that matter was transacted. The last letter I can find any copy of, to you, was written from a place called Fredg. in the State of New York and dated the 27th. of Octor.⁵⁵ in answer to one from you of the 5th. of September. In this letter I inform you that I had rented my whole Estate, under your care, to Mr. Custis, and requested in the most explicit terms, "that all the money you now possess, or may hereafter receive of mine, before you quit Mr. Custis's business, may be sent to Mr. Lund Washington by him or some other safe hand. And before you remove from your present employment, I must further beg that you will furnish me with an exact accot. of every thing sold from, and purchased for my Estate under your care, in short, the exact state of all expenditures and sales for my use since the last account I settled with you myself; and as letters are subject to miscarriage, I shall be obliged to you to leave a copy thereof with a list of the balances due me (if any there should be), with Mr. Custis, that I may in case of accidents be provided with another copy from him. When I speak of a list of balances, I hope and trust there will be few or none, first from your care in making your collections, and next from the plenty of money, which leaves every person without even the shadow of excuse to withhold payment of debts, at

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this time. But if the case should be otherwise, a list of those debts first properly settled and reduced to speci

55. See Washington's letter to James Hill, Oct, 27, 1778, *ante* (vol. 13).

alties (to avoid disputes in the collection by a new hand unacquainted with the transactions, and unable to account for things which would not be disputed with you) left with Mr. Custis, will enable him, or some other person in my behalf to receive payment of the money, with such interest as may be due on the Bonds or Bills”.

In a P.S. to this letter, you are desired to put the Tobacco Notes into Colo. Bassett's hands, to be disposed of for my benefit. If subsequent to these you received orders from me to pay my money, and surrender your accots. into the hands of Mr. Posey, I should be glad to be informed of it, as it is my desire to act with candour and fairness in this as well as in every other business. To me it seems exceedingly strange, however, that you should have no copies of the accounts you gave up, common prudence I should have thought would have dictated a measure of this kind to any man.

In your letter of the 24th. of September last, you say you never received any money from Mr. Newton except £180, from one Jacob Williams by his order; but by a letter of your own, in my possession, dated the 10th. of May 1777, you not only acknowledge the receipt of the above sum, but of £120, more from Mr. Willm. Holt in consequence of an order from the same Gentleman, and besides these two sums,

I am charged in Mr. Newton's account with £100 paid you the 12th. of September 1776 at the time you received these orders.

It is indispensably necessary that these matters between you and me shou'd be settled, and it is much my wish that it could be done in an amicable and friendly way. I hope you will therefore pursue the necessary modes to do this and without delay which will be exceedingly pleasing to, Sir, Yr. etc.

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P.S. I have just written to Mr. Posey to surrender your Accots. to you or me.⁵⁶

***To THOMAS PETERS**

Mount Vernon, January 20, 1787.

Sir: It is now more than six weeks since I begged to be informed in decided terms, if you would furnish me with 50 Bushls. of Barley, that I might know whether to depend upon that quantity from *you*, or resort to *Philadelphia* for it, where it had been offered to me.

I informed you too, that unless the latter was seasonably embraced I might,

56. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

in case of failure with you, be disappointed altogether. To this momt. (when arrangements should not only have been made, but the ground had in full preparation) I am left in uncertainty, a wish to be relieved from it, must be my apology for giving you the trouble of another letter on this subject. I am etc.⁵⁷

To JOHN HENRY

Mount Vernon, January 23, 1787.

Sir: Your letter of the 26th. of October,⁵⁸ and the piece of Antiquity accompanying it, I received by the hands of Doctr. Stuart on the 13th. inst:

You will be pleased to accept of my thanks for your politeness in sending me the latter which, on account of its antiquity and having been once the property of so remarkable a character as Oliver Cromwell, would undoubtedly render it pleasing to almost anyone, and to an antiquary,

57. From a facsimile kindly furnished by J. D. B. Peters, of Tampa, Fla.

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58. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

perhaps invaluable. I am, etc.59

To JOHN NICHOLSON60

Mount Vernon, January 23, 1787.

Sir: Your letter of the 9th. instant, together with a statement of the Finances of the State of Pennsylvania, came duly to hand. You will accept of my best thanks for your attention and politeness in transmitting to me the above Statement.

The prosperity of any part of the Union gives me a singular pleasure, and I cannot but express the satisfaction I feel at the happy situation of your Finances. I am, etc.59

59. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

60. Comptroller general and receiver of taxes of the State of Pennsylvania.

To ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD

Mount Vernon, January 23, 1787.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 13th. came to my hands a few days after my Nephew G: Washington left this for New Kent, which, and his not seeing you on his way down, were unlucky circumstances as he could, and no doubt would have arranged matters so as that a Vessel which is sent from Colchester to York River for Negroes which Colonel Bassett has given him, might have stopped at the mouth of Potomac creek for the Oats and other articles you have been so obliging as to provide for me.

Immediately upon the receipt of your letter, I wrote to George informing him, of the contents of it, requesting him to order the Vessel to stop at the above place for the

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purpose mentioned; but the chances, I fear, are against the letter's getting to his hands. Nevertheless, I pray you to desire Mr. Young⁶¹ to get his Oats ready without delay as the Vessel will not, indeed ought not to be detained a moment longer on her passage, than is indispensably necessary to transport the Oats and other things across, which will be done at one trip if waggons can be hired. To this end my nephew (if the letter reaches him) is instructed. If this vessel should not stop, another shall be sent to Potomac creek, it will be proper therefore that no time should be lost in preparing the Oats.

For the different kinds

61. Who had rented Col. Burges Ball's place called "Traveller's Rest."

of seeds, you have promised me of your own growth, I pray you to accept my thanks. I shall be attentive to make the most of them, and shall be obliged to you for letting me know whether the Barley, or bear (as your farmer calls it) is a Spring or Winter grain; and at what time it ought to be sown. Your bunch-bean accounts for the mistake of asking for bunch peas. George led me into it, for I had never heard of them before. The Beans must be valuable, and I shall esteem them an acquisition. When ought they to be planted? Is your field pea subject to the bug, as the garden peas are? How did your field beans turn out? If you have any of these to spare I would thank you for some. They are (if of the proper sort) highly esteemed in the present husbandry of England as a preparatory crop for wheat.

Mrs. Washington and Fanny join me in offering every good wish for you, my niece and the family; and with sentiments of great regard and affection, I am, etc.⁶²

62. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.